

**AMENDED ORDER GOVERNING EMERGENCY MEASURES FOR  
ENTRANCE TO ALL NINTH CIRCUIT COURT FACILITIES TO  
PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY DUE TO COVID-19**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution and section 43.26, Florida Statutes, the Chief Judge of each judicial circuit is charged with the authority and the power to do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Chief Judge's constitutional and statutory responsibility for administrative supervision of the courts within the circuit and considering available resources, to create and maintain an organization capable of effecting the efficient, prompt, and proper administration of justice for the citizens of this State, the Chief Judge is required to exercise direction, *see* Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.215(b)(2), (b)(3); and

**WHEREAS**, in response to the public health emergency caused by the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Florida Supreme Court and the Ninth Judicial Circuit have taken significant measures to limit and modify court operations so as to ensure the safe administration of justice<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, in conducting essential proceedings and proceedings critical to the state of emergency or the public health emergency, circuit and county courts shall employ all methods

---

<sup>1</sup> *See*, Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-13 (Fla. March 13, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-15, (Fla. March 17, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23 (Fla. April 6, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 1 (Fla. May 4, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 2 (Fla. May 21, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-32 (Fla. May 21, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 3 (Fla. June 8, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 4 (Fla. June 16, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-32, Amendment 1 (Fla. June 16, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 5 (Fla. July 2, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-32, Amendment 2 (Fla. June 16, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 6 (Fla. August 12, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-32, Amendment 3 (Fla. August 12, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 7 (Fla. October 2, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-32, Amendment 4 (Fla. October 15, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 8 (Fla. November 23, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-32, Amendment 5 (Fla. November 23, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-32, Amendment 6 (Fla. December 21, 2020); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 9 (Fla. February 21, 2021); Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-23, Amendment 10 (Fla. March 9, 2021) (all available at <https://www.floridasupremecourt.org/Emergency>).

practicable to minimize risk of COVID-19 exposure to individuals involved in the proceedings or the general public; and

**WHEREAS**, Administrative Order No. AOSC20-32 first issued on May 21, 2020 by Chief Justice Charles T. Canady, and subsequently amended, provides that all “[c]ourt reopening protocols and practices shall be guided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations” with guidance from the Florida Department of Health, county health departments, and local medical professionals. Those safety requirements include the wearing of masks in court facilities, and temperature checks, among other safety measures; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the intent of the judicial branch to transition to optimal operations in a manner that protects the public’s health and safety during each of the anticipated phases of the pandemic;

In accordance with the authority vested in the Chief Judge by Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, section 43.26, Florida Statutes, and Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, and to promote public safety, it is hereby **ORDERED, immediately** that:

1. To effect the continuation of all court operations and proceedings in a manner that protects the health and safety of all, the Court will adhere to the protocols and practices issued by the Florida Supreme Court as the Court transitions through each of the anticipated phases of the pandemic.

2. This Order applies to everyone entering any court facility<sup>2</sup> in the Ninth Judicial Circuit including litigants, lawyers, witnesses, visitors to a court facility, court staff, clerks, deputies, security personnel, and Judges.

3. Everyone entering a court facility shall wear a face mask, covering their nose and mouth, with no exceptions. The face mask, covering both the nose and mouth, shall be worn while in all common/public areas of the court facility including all public or private stairwells and public restrooms. A face mask is defined as a paper or other material surgical type of mask or a cloth covering meant to cover both the nose and mouth, and no other part of the face, which creates a physical barrier for the mouth and nose of the wearer. Clear face shields may also be worn but must be in combination with a face mask.

4. Masks shall be worn in all public areas of the court facility, including courtrooms or hearing rooms, unless the Judge or Judicial officer authorizes its removal.

5. Before entering any court facility all persons shall undergo a health screening (as set forth below in paragraph 6) and a required temperature check. Judges, Clerks, Clerks’ employees, Sheriff’s Deputies, the State Attorney, Assistant State Attorneys, the Public Defender, Assistant Public Defenders, and private security staff may be checked for symptoms and temperature

---

<sup>2</sup> Court facility includes all of the main courthouses, branch courthouses, jail courtrooms, Osceola County Courthouse and Orange County Courthouse, and Building A offices of the court reporters and other court employees, and the deposition rooms.

consistent with their respective court, agency, or company policies, which policies are subject to approval of the Chief Judge and which shall be at least as stringent as the screening policies set forth in this Order for those entering a court facility. Any person who presents symptoms, or has a temperature of 100.4 or over, or who indicate “yes” to any of the questions contained herein, is prohibited from entering any court facility.

6. Health Screening and Temperature Checks:

Health Screening: Signs containing the following questions will be displayed at all public court facility entrances. If a person answers “yes” to any question, that person shall not be permitted to enter the facility.

1. Do you have any of the following symptoms (excluding those due to a known medical reason other than COVID-19):

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Fever or chills

Fatigue

Muscle or body aches

Headache

Sore throat

New loss of taste or smell

Congestion or runny nose

Nausea or vomiting

Diarrhea

2. Are you currently awaiting the results of a test to determine if you have COVID-19 based on symptoms or suspected exposure?

3. Are you under instructions to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19?

4. Within the past fourteen days, have you had close contact with someone with a COVID-19 diagnosis or who is awaiting test results for COVID-19 based on symptoms or suspected exposure?

Temperature Checks: All persons will be checked for their body temperature using an infrared or other non-contact temperature device before entrance to a court facility. Any person who registers a body temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater shall not be permitted to enter the court facility.

7. The security personnel or any person performing the health/temperature checks shall attempt to obtain and record the following information from a person who is not permitted to enter

the court facility by virtue of the health screening and/or temperature check: (a) name of the individual, (b) the individual's reason for visiting the court facility, (c) case number and judge (if known and applicable), and (d) the individual's contact information, including a telephone number and email address. In the event an individual refuses to undergo a health screening or temperature check, or refuses to wear a mask for entrance to the court facility, the security personnel or other person performing the health/temperature checks shall attempt to obtain and record the same information described above. Once the information is obtained, the information shall be provided to the appropriate Judge, Judicial Officer, Clerk, or other court facility occupant so that alternate arrangements can be made for the person, such as a remote appearance, rescheduling a hearing, or other measures as necessary.

8. Prior to being transported from the jail or juvenile facilities to a court facility, all inmates or detainees shall be screened. Those inmates or detainees with a fever of 100.4 or greater or who answer "yes" to any of the questions listed in paragraph (6) shall not be transported to any court facility. The fact that an inmate or detainee will not be transported because of ineligibility under the health screening and/or temperature check shall be timely communicated to the appropriate Judge or Judicial Officer, so that alternate arrangements can be made for the person as necessary.

9. Appropriate social distancing will be enforced in all common/public areas of the court facilities.

10. For more information regarding the comprehensive COVID-19 emergency measures for Florida trial courts please refer to Florida Supreme Court Administrative Order No(s). AOSC20-13, AOSC20-15, AOSC20-23, AOSC20-32, and amendments thereto. (Available at <https://www.floridasupremecourt.org/Emergency>).

**DONE AND ORDERED** at Orlando, Florida, this 25 day of March, 2021.



Donald A. Myers, Jr.  
Chief Judge

Copies provided to:

Clerk of Court, Orange County  
Clerk of Court, Osceola County  
General E-Mail Distribution List  
<http://www.ninthcircuit.org>