

MEDIA ADVISORY



11th Judicial Circuit of Florida

For Immediate Release

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COVID-19 ADVISORY #5: UPDATED MARCH 15, 2020

FLORIDA SUPREME COURT RULE CHANGE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS REGARDING CORONAVIRUS DISEASE COVID-19 AND COURT PROCEDURES TO BE ENACTED IN RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS DISEASE COVID-19

All at the Miami-Dade Courts are concerned about the community and all judges and court staff.

Chief Judge Bertila Soto contacted the Florida Supreme Court on Thursday, March 12th, to request an order suspending legal time limits for the next two weeks and any other relief deemed necessary by the Court.

On Friday, March 13th, Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Canady issued Administrative Order AOSC 20-12 suspending legal time limits, grand jury proceedings, jury selection proceedings, and jury trials beginning Monday, March 16th, for a period of two weeks ending on March 30th. In addition, the Administrative Order suspends all rules of procedure, court orders and opinions that formerly limited or prohibited the use of communication equipment for remote court proceedings. This means that jurors do not have to appear for jury duty during these dates.

The Florida Supreme Court also issued Administrative Order AOSC20-13, enacting a change to Rule 2.205 that provides the Chief Justice with additional powers and duties to be able to address events of a public health emergency. This Rule change will be in effect from close of business Friday, March 13th, through close of business Monday, March 30th.

The Administrative Order and Rule 2.205 change, which are effective for all Florida state courts, are attached.

In addition, the Miami-Dade Courts are enacting changes to protect access to justice while balancing health and public welfare. To the extent possible, the courts and its justice partners will work to minimize the appearance of persons in the courtroom and limit the transportation of in-custody adults

and juveniles to courts.

For the next two weeks, which may be extended if needed and upon coordination with the Florida Supreme Court, all mission-critical hearings will remain open on regular scheduling and at regular locations **(except for any temporary location changes listed below).**

Non-mission critical hearings will be addressed as follows:

In civil matters, the court is moving to as many remote or telephonic hearings in as possible. This includes family, circuit civil, county civil and probate cases. Litigants represented by an attorney with questions about a hearing on a civil matter should reach out to their attorneys. Litigants who are self-represented should call the presiding judge's office. A judicial directory is available at www.jud11.flcourts.org.

For Criminal, Dependency, Domestic Violence Cases, Baker Acts and Marchman Hearings, the following procedures will apply:

1. Felony Criminal
 - a. Bond hearings will continue as they normally do.
 - b. Arraignment hearings will be heard but the defendant's presence is not necessary. If the defendant does not appear and there is no written plea, the case will be reset to a future date.
 - c. Emergency hearings will be scheduled as needed.
2. Misdemeanor Criminal
 - a. Bond hearings will continue as they normally do.
 - b. Arraignment hearings will be heard but the defendant's presence is not necessary. If the defendant does not appear and there is no written plea, the case will be reset to a future date.
 - c. **All misdemeanor criminal trials are suspended for the next two weeks, March 16-March 27.**
 - d. Emergency hearings will be scheduled as needed.
3. Traffic
 - a. Parties do not have to appear at pre-trial conferences, they will be re-set to a future date.
 - b. **All misdemeanor criminal traffic trials as well as civil traffic trials are suspended for the next two weeks, March 16-March 27.**
4. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence intake centers will be open.

 - a. Civil Injunction (restraining order) hearings will continue.
 - b. Criminal domestic violence cases:

- i. Bond hearings: for the next two weeks, March 16-March 27, criminal domestic violence bond hearings will be held at 11:00 a.m. in Courtroom 5-3 of the Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building, 1351 NW 12 Street.
- ii. Arraignment hearings will be heard but the defendant's presence is not necessary. If the defendant does not appear and there is no written plea, the case will be reset to a future date.
- iii. Emergency hearings will be scheduled as needed.
- iv. Risk Protection Order hearings will continue.

5. Delinquency

- i. Detention hearings will be handled remotely.
- ii. Arraignment hearings will be heard but the defendant's presence is not necessary. If the defendant does not appear and there is no written plea, the case will be reset to a future date.
- iii. Emergency hearings will be scheduled as needed.
- iv. Telephonic/remote hearings will be held as needed.

6. Dependency

- i. Shelter hearings will take place as they normally do.
- ii. Emergency hearings will be scheduled as needed.
- iii. Telephonic/remote hearings will be held as needed.

7. Baker Acts and Marchman Act Hearings will proceed as they normally do.

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The mission of Florida's judicial branch is to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and provide for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

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