

Twentieth Judicial Circuit Administrative Office of the Courts
COVID-19 Advisory #5
03/27/2020

Courts of the 20th Circuit will remain open

Twentieth Judicial Circuit Courthouses will continue to stay open even in the event a “Stay-at-Home” or “Shelter-in-Place” order is signed by the Board of County Commissioners in any of the five counties of the Circuit. Court operations and services will continue to function as they are currently while ensuring the public, our Criminal Justice partners, and court staff remain safe.

To the extent that court personnel and other governmental employees are deemed essential, the prior restrictions imposed in previous local memoranda and Administrative Order 2.39 will remain in place.

Court proceedings that are considered essential and critical are to be conducted remotely using communication equipment, and if remote electronic means are not available, then in person with only attorneys, parties, necessary witnesses, and the media in the courtroom. Everyone present will be required to abide by “social distancing.” If an in-person hearing is required, all necessary persons who can appear remotely should do so. The hearings that are considered essential and critical are outlined in the attached memorandum (Memo 4 – Courts Remain Open with Limitations to Mitigate effects of COVID-19).

At this time, all civil and family non-evidentiary hearings shall be held remotely unless the Administrative Judge of the division or county finds that a remote hearing is impossible or would violate due process. Also, civil and family evidentiary hearings may be held remotely if the presiding judge finds it can be done without violating due process.

Attorneys, parties and witnesses with upcoming trials or hearings are advised to contact the appropriate judicial office with any questions.

Employees of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit Administrative Office of the Courts will continue to report for their assigned work duties, unless they were approved for telecommuting / alternate work schedule, or deemed at a higher risk for severe illness.

This directive along with Administrative Order 2.39 remain in effect until further notice.

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