

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF FLORIDA, SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**AMENDED TEMPORARY COURT CLOSURES AND  
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES (COVID-19)**

**IN ACCORDANCE** with Florida Supreme Court Administrative Order AOSC 20-17, and Seventh Judicial Circuit Administrative Order Z-2020-032, from Chief Judge Raul Zambrano to limit court proceedings through April 20, 2020 at 8:00 a.m., the following procedures for St. Johns County are in effect:

1. Only the following court proceedings deemed mission critical will be conducted as necessary through April 20, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.:
  - a) First appearances;
  - b) Bond hearings;
  - c) Juvenile detention hearings;
  - d) Juvenile shelter hearings;
  - e) Domestic violence, repeat violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking injunctions, as well as all chapter 39 injunction hearings;
  - f) Risk protection orders;
  - g) Marchman Acts;
  - h) Baker Acts;
  - i) Family law (including juvenile) cases where the imminent safety of children is an issue;
  - j) Vulnerable Adult injunctions;
  - k) Emergency incapacity petitions and appointment of guardians;
  - l) Proceedings involving requests for “do not resuscitate” orders;
  - m) Adult Protective Service Act proceedings;
  - n) Requests for search warrants and arrest warrants;
  - o) Violations of quarantine or isolation orders;
  - p) Violations of orders to limit travel;
  - q) Violations of orders to close public or private buildings;
  - r) Seizure of bodily fluids;
  - s) Mandatory vaccinations proceedings;
  - t) Enforcement of curfew orders;
  - u) Extraordinary writs;
  - v) Any other “emergency” proceedings or hearings as authorized by the Chief Judge.
2. The aforementioned mission critical proceedings will take place remotely, through available technologies, where feasible, in courtrooms capable of recording the proceedings. All other proceedings that are not deemed mission critical, will be canceled and rescheduled, unless the assigned judge is able to conduct the matter with all parties, counsel, and witnesses appearing remotely without the necessity of in-person court appearances.
3. Criminal arraignments, competency hearings, and changes of pleas, where the Defendant is incarcerated will take place as scheduled. Inmates will not be transported for these hearings and

will attend via remote video. Proceedings involving out of custody Defendants will be rescheduled for a later date.

4. All jury proceedings and jury trials are suspended through April 17, 2020. Trials scheduled for during this period will be rescheduled. All persons summoned for jury duty during this period have completed their jury service and are excused from any further jury obligation.
5. The requirement in Rule 1.580(a), Fla. R. Civ. P. for the Clerk of Court to issue writs of possession has been suspended until the close of business on April 17, 2020 by order of the Florida Supreme Court (AOSC 20-17). In addition, the Clerk of Court is directed to cancel foreclosure sales and cease issuance of D-6 license suspensions.
6. Persons in custody in St. Johns County pursuant to an out of county warrant, with no local charges pending, shall have their detention, monetary bond, and other conditions of pretrial release addressed at first appearance. For out of county capiases and violations of probation warrants, before setting or modifying a monetary bond or other conditions of pretrial release, the first appearance judge must obtain all relevant information from a judge in the originating county, utilizing the recently distributed statewide contact list. If unable to reach a judge from the originating county, Judge James Clayton and Judge Terence Perkins have authority to address the issue.
7. First appearances will be conducted using remote video via Zoom, starting at 8:30 a.m., unless otherwise specified. The Office of the Public Defender is provisionally appointed for all inmates at first appearance without the need for an indigency affidavit to be completed at that stage.
8. Inmates will NOT be transported to the courthouse except by specific Order of the Chief Judge or Administrative Judge. All proceedings involving inmates will occur remotely via Zoom, where feasible.
9. All St. Johns County juvenile detention hearings will take place at the Volusia County Branch Jail, at 8:30 a.m., when necessary.
10. A duty judge and judicial assistant will be present in the St. Johns County Courthouse during normal business hours to handle those mission critical matters specified in paragraph 1, as follows:

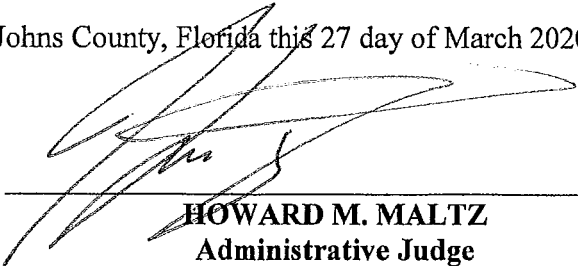
Friday, 3/27 – Judge Howard Maltz; JA – Susan Miller; 827-5600 or ext. 4383  
Monday, 3/30 – Judge Howard Maltz  
Tuesday, 3/31 – Judge R. Lee Smith; JA – Traci Davis; 827-5606 or ext 4386  
Wednesday, 4/1 – Judge Bryan Rendzio; JA – Megan Lapinski, 827-5647 or ext. 564  
Thursday, 4/2 – Judge John Alexander; JA–Karen Higgins; 827-5603 or ext.4380  
Friday, 4/3 – Judge R. Lee Smith  
Monday, 4/6- Judge Alex Christine; JA – Patty Hillis, 827-5613 or ext. 4376  
Tuesday, 4/7- Judge Charles Tinlin; JA-Tammy Sites, 827-5611 or ext. 4378  
Wednesday, 4/8- Judge Howard Maltz  
Thursday, 4/9- Judge R. Lee Smith  
Monday, 4/13- Judge Charles Tinlin  
Tuesday, 4/14- Judge Bryan Rendzio  
Wednesday, 4/15- Judge Bryan Rendzio  
Thursday, 4/16- Judge John Alexander

Friday, 4/17- Judge Alex Christine

Any after-hours exigent matters will follow the normal on-call judge procedures.

11. Any hearings deemed necessary by the presiding judge concerning those matters identified in paragraph 1 above will be conducted using electronic means, to the extent feasible. Such hearings shall be conducted following first appearances each morning, unless otherwise specified. Limited admission to the courtroom may be permitted by the presiding judge to media, witnesses, parties, court clerks, crime victims, and attorneys for their proceeding only. No other persons will be admitted to the courtrooms. For the safety of the bar, litigants, witnesses, court staff, and the Court, attorneys are strongly encouraged to download Zoom, a free and readily available software, to remotely participate in court proceedings.
12. Statutory and procedural time limits are extended and/or tolled, as provided in the Administrative Orders of the Florida Supreme Court.
13. Court proceedings will be cancelled, postponed, and rescheduled in accordance with these procedures and the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center will be closed to the general public during this emergency except for the limited purposes of attending the proceedings in paragraph 1, filing petitions for temporary injunctions, and requesting emergency relief from the Court.
14. Motions filed by attorneys or parties labeled as an “emergency,” which are not true emergencies will be summarily denied without addressing the merits of the motions. A true emergency exists *only* where there is an *imminent* threat to the health, welfare or safety of persons or property. Improperly labeling a motion as an “emergency,” diverts resources of the judicial system from dealing with other matters.
15. The south entrance to the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center shall be closed for public access and only accessible to courthouse employees with proper identification. The north entrance will be open for public access, limited to those matters specified herein. The St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office is authorized to deny entry to the Judicial Center of any persons presenting for any purpose other than the matters specified herein. Any person, including those who otherwise would be permitted to enter the courthouse, exhibiting symptoms of the COVID-19 virus, has traveled outside the United States since March 1, 2020, or has knowingly been in contact with a person infected with COVID-19, shall be denied access to the courthouse. Any questions regarding access to the courthouse should be directed to the duty judge or the administrative judge.
16. The Clerk of Court shall provide enough daily staffing to support those mission critical proceedings specified in paragraph 1.

**DONE AND ORDERED** in St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida this 27 day of March 2020.

  
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**HOWARD M. MALTZ**  
Administrative Judge