

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

**IN RE: COURT OPERATIONS  
UNDER THE EXIGENT  
CIRCUMSTANCES  
CREATED BY COVID-19**

**Case No. 4:95mc40111**

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**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have warned of the threat represented by the outbreak and spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States. The World Health Organization labelled COVID-19 a global pandemic and the President of the United States and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis have declared a public health emergency throughout the United States and the State of Florida, respectively. According to these and other public health experts, social distancing measures are the most effective way to combat the rapid spread of COVID-19 and prevent illness.

In consideration of the serious health crisis facing the nation and the State of Florida from COVID-19 and in an effort to maintain the orderly administration of justice, the Court has determined that it is necessary and in the interest of public safety and justice, to take proactive measures to slow the spread of the virus and

protect the health and safety of litigants, counsel, Court staff, grand jurors, petit jurors, witnesses, and the public through the following measures.

1. As part of the Northern District of Florida's Continuity of Operations Plan, all Court staff have been directed to telework and all Court locations within the Northern District of Florida have been closed to the public, except for those individual who are required to attend in-person hearings, trials, or necessary matters before the Court. *See* N.D. Fla. Case No. 4:95-mc-40111, ECF Doc. 343.
2. To protect the health and safety of all occupants, those who are required to attend in-person hearings, trials, or other necessary matters before the Court, are required to practice social distancing measures. Visitors may not congregate in public lobbies and must maintain at least a six-foot distance from others while inside or waiting to enter or exit courthouses. Public elevator use is restricted to a single adult passenger at a time.
3. Judges are strongly encouraged to conduct court proceedings by telephone or video conferencing when practicable.
4. Although Court facilities are closed to the public, the Court's electronic filing system continues to accept filings and the Clerk's Office continues to accept

paper filings through the mail. Clerk's Office staff also continue to answer telephone calls from jurors, attorneys, and the public.

5. All jury trials in the Northern District of Florida that are scheduled to occur between May 1, 2020, and June 30, 2020, are continued. The Court may issue other orders concerning future continuances as necessary and appropriate.
6. All trial specific deadlines in criminal cases scheduled to begin before July 1, 2020, are continued pending further Order of the Court. Individual judges may continue trial-specific deadlines in civil cases as necessary.
7. Individual judges presiding over criminal proceedings may take such actions consistent with this Order as may be lawful and appropriate to ensure the fairness of the proceedings and preserve the rights of the parties.
8. The Court is cognizant of the right of criminal defendants to a speedy and public trial under the Sixth Amendment and the particular application of that right in cases involving defendants who are detained pending trial. Any motion by a criminal defendant seeking an exception to this Order in order to exercise that right should be directed to the District Judge assigned to the matter in the first instance; provided, however, that any motion seeking an exception that would require jurors to be summoned for a jury trial must be filed no later than June 1, 2020.

9. The time period of any continuance entered as a result of this Order shall be excluded under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), as the Court finds that the ends of justice served by taking that action outweigh the interests of the parties and the public in a speedy trial. Absent further Order of the Court or any individual judge, the period of exclusion shall be from May 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020. The Court may extend the period of exclusion as circumstances may warrant. This Order and period of exclusion are incorporated by reference as a specific finding pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A) in the record of each pending case where the Speedy Trial Act applies. *See Zedner v. United States*, 547 U.S. 489, 506-07 (2006). The period of exclusion in this Court's prior Administrative Orders on this subject are likewise incorporated by reference as a specific finding pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 3161(h)(7)(A) in the record of each pending case where the Speedy Trial Act applies.

10. All Central Violations Bureau (CVB) initial appearances scheduled for the Pensacola, Panama City and Gainesville Divisions on June 17, 2020, are rescheduled. All CVB initial appearances for the Pensacola Division will be held at 8:30 a.m. on July 15, 2020, CVB initial appearances for the Panama City Division will be held at 1:30 p.m. on July 15, 2020, and CVB initial

appearances for the Gainesville Division will be held at 10:00 a.m. on July 26, 2020.

11. All naturalization ceremonies in the Northern District of Florida are suspended through June 30, 2020.

The Court recognizes that this situation continues to evolve and will issue additional Administrative Orders as necessary based on recommendations from other federal and state government and health officials.

**DONE AND ORDERED** this 7<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

**s/ Mark E. Walker**  
**Chief United States District Judge**