
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

TO: All Circuit Criminal Division Judges

FROM: Andrea Ricker Wolfson, Administrative Judge, Criminal Division

DATE: July 31, 2021

SUBJECT: Hybrid Court Operations

Effective immediately, in an effort to keep the volume of people at a minimum in the Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building as well as to accommodate lawyers who practice in multiple divisions and courthouses, the Circuit Criminal Division will provide access to court both in person and via Zoom in a hybrid fashion for **all daily calendars**.

The following must take place in person unless the parties and the judge agree to proceed on Zoom and the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure and the Florida Supreme Court's Administrative Order allow: (1) evidentiary hearings; (2) bench and jury trials; and (3) most pleas. At the discretion of the division judge, **all other matters** may be conducted via Zoom at the preference of the parties.

Anyone who wishes to be in the courtroom on a laptop or device to see Zoom MUST have their device's microphone and the Zoom audio muted at all times regardless of whether or not they are speaking. The courtroom microphones which are connected to Zoom will pick up the audio. If the device and/or Zoom audio on an individual device is on, this will result in echo and feedback.

Judges must be diligent about requiring people to speak into the courtroom microphones. In addition, judges must frequently check in with their court reporters to make sure the record is being captured at all times.

All operating courtrooms will continue to be staffed with at least one Assistant State Attorney and one Assistant Public Defender, in addition to the judge, clerks, bailiffs, probation officers and correctional officers. Inmates will be brought to court only for hearings, pleas, and trials. If an inmate was not transported to court but wishes to accept a plea that will result in them getting out of custody, Corrections will bring them on Zoom on a staggered basis. If there is a surplus of inmate Zoom hearings on any one particular day, Judges Wolfson, de la O, and Tinkler Mendez will make themselves available to handle them.

This Administrative Memorandum shall be effective on July 31, 2021.