



MEMORANDUM

To: Division Judges, Judicial Personnel, and Administrative Office of the Courts Staff

FROM: Judge Marcia B. Caballero
Administrative Judge, Unified Children’s Court Division

DATE: 12.05.2023

RE: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARING IN A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY, HURRICANE OR CATASTROHIC EVENT IMPACTING THE UNIFIED CHILDREN’S COURT DIVISION OPERATIONS

This Administrative Memorandum serves as a guide so that the public and government entities are aware of and prepared to respond to emergency situations. In the event of an emergency where the Chief Judge and/or Trial Court Administrator as designee, declares a court facility shutdown (or partial shutdown), affected court divisions should, in accordance with the type of emergency, communicate to court stakeholders and the community which, if any, hearings will proceed despite such closure, and modify procedures in compliance with federal, state, and local guidance in accordance with the division’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

Therefore, pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Chief Judge as Administrative Judge of the Unified Children’s Court Division of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida and Rule 2.215, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, it is necessary that courts and the parties have clear guidance as to how proceedings will be conducted (remotely, in-person, or hybrid) and how evidence will be presented to the Court, the Clerk, and the parties, in the event of an emergency sufficient to require a court facility closure or partial closure.

The following shall set forth emergency preparedness procedures for conducting hearings in the Unified Children’s Court Division:

FULL CLOSURE OF COURT FACILITY:

No court business will be addressed other than statutorily required hearings, as set forth herein.

1. Communicate with division judges and court staff to advise of full closure to ensure all emergency hearings are completed before closure.
2. Communicate with court partners regarding court closure with information of where the statutorily required hearings will be conducted.
3. Case Management Unit to review calendar, identify domestic violence cases that are scheduled during the full closure, reschedule cases, and prepare extension paperwork.
4. Court staff that can work remotely will assist with court operations.
5. Communicate with Building Management, AOC Facilities, and/or CEMT for updates.

PARTIAL CLOSURE OF COURT FACILITY:

Non-statutorily required business may be conducted in person or through a video conferencing platform (Zoom) or hybrid (use of both), as set forth herein.

1. Communicate with Division Judges to advise of partial closure to ensure all emergency hearings are completed before closure.
2. Communicate with court partners regarding court closure with information of where the non-statutorily required hearings will be conducted.
3. Division to assess hearing capabilities, i.e., safety concerns for public and staff, and court reporting capabilities, of the division based on the partial closure and require remote appearances for any previously scheduled in-person hearings.
4. Court staff that can work remotely can work remotely to assist with court operations.
5. Communicate with Building Management, AOC Facilities, and/or CEMT for updates.

To continue with mission critical hearings and proceedings, the division judge, their staff, and key Administrative Office of the Courts personnel are required to implement these procedures. The Administrative Judge and Court Operations Division Director will convene meetings with key stakeholders of the division and the Clerk of the Court upon notice of a court facility closure to coordinate statutorily mandated, mission critical court hearings and proceedings.

Case Types to be heard until further notice:

- **Full Closure**
 - Juvenile Detention/Sounding (§985.25(1) & §985.255 Fla. Stat. 2023)
 - Juvenile Dependency Shelter (§39.401 (3)(b) & 39.401(5) & §39.402 Fla. Stat. 2021)
- **Partial Closure**
 - Juvenile Delinquency
 - Juvenile Dependency
 - Juvenile Marchman Hearings
 - Judicial Waiver Hearings
 - Family/Domestic Relations
 - Domestic Violence/Civil Injunctions for Protection

Courtrooms:

- **Full Closure**
 - All statutorily mandated hearings will be conducted at the Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building, Courtroom 1
- **Partial Closure** – Courtroom selection will be made according to functionality of technology and availability within the Miami-Dade Children’s Courthouse

Courtroom 2-1	Courtroom 10-1	Courtroom 11-3
Courtroom 2-2	Courtroom 10-2	Courtroom 11-4
Courtroom 9-1	Courtroom 10-3	Courtroom 12-1
Courtroom 9-2	Courtroom 10-4	Courtroom 12-2

Courtroom 9-3 Courtroom 11-1 Courtroom 12-3
Courtroom 9-4 Courtroom 11-2 Courtroom 12-4

Zoom Video Conferencing Platform Access:

- When **full closure** occurs, REG Virtual Zoom Meeting ID: **996 0478 5521**
- When **partial closure** occurs, UCC Division Zoom Meeting IDs are located on the following website at [Virtual Courtroom Directory \(flcourts.org\)](http://VirtualCourtroomDirectory.flcourts.org). Select Unified Children's Court/Juvenile Court on the left-hand side of the webpage.

Division Emergency Contacts:

- 305-679-1600- Unified Children's Court Division Resource Center
- 305-679-1600- Unified Children's Court Division Operations

Notices will be sent out accordingly.

Updates, including reopening information, regarding the full or partial emergency shutdown can be found on the Circuit's website at www.jud11.flcourts.org. For case related information visit the Clerk of the Courts website at <https://www.miamidadeclerk.gov/clerk/home.page> and for information about county related issues and other local services such as transportation visit the Miami-Dade County website home page at <https://www.miamidade.gov/global/home.page>. Additional information can be found through local news and radio.

The above-mentioned procedures are in response to recommendations by the *Steering Committee on Problem-Solving Courts and Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability* for enhancements to the judicial branch emergency preparedness procedures. Accordingly, the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court has directed chief judges to follow certain standards and best practices related to due process service delivery to minimize risks to the public and court staff while keeping the courts open to the fullest extent possible during an emergency event and take all possible steps to facilitate court access by conducting proceedings with the use of technology.

Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.530 allows for use of communication technology for remote hearings; and Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.430 (d) authorizes remote testimony and swearing in of witnesses, prospective jurors for voir dire, and empaneled jurors for trial, using audio-video communication technology as described in Supreme Court [AOSC 21-990](#). Local Administrative Order [AO 21-11](#), outlines the circuit's operational plans for conducting court proceedings post pandemic, and procedures for the introduction and use of documentary evidence through remote means for virtual evidentiary hearings.

Should you have any questions regarding the above do not hesitate to contact me or visit the [11th Judicial Circuit's](#) website.