



Supreme Court of Florida

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Florida’s Chief Justice adopts new revisions to earlier pandemic guidelines for the phased return to normal statewide court operations

TALLAHASSEE – Chief Justice Charles Canady issued [two new administrative orders](#) August 12, 2020, amending guidelines for the four-phased timeline that will govern the return to normal statewide court operations. The four phases were established in [prior orders](#) issued since the state courts began pandemic operations in March, all based on recommendations of a [COVID-19 Workgroup](#) and general public health guidelines.

The Workgroup’s mission is to find ways for courts to operate as fully as possible during each phase of the pandemic. The Workgroup is chaired by Circuit Judge Lisa Taylor Munyon from the Orlando area.

The August 12, 2020, orders and an attached report amend the [Comprehensive Measures](#) and the [Public Health & Safety Precautions](#) that provide standards for pandemic operations in the state courts. They make the following major changes:

1. Provide updated criteria for the transition to different phases;
2. Require a human resources policy at each court to address potential COVID-19 exposure of court employees and judges;
3. Update health screening criteria for entry into a courthouse; and
4. Provide updated guidance for courts in monitoring local conditions and public health data when expanding in-person proceedings; and
5. Provide a methodology to determine deteriorating local health conditions that would require an amendment to a local operational plan or a return to an earlier phase.

Florida’s courts have been operating under emergency guidelines since a [March 13, 2020](#), order in which Canady suspended jury trials and took other actions restricting potential disease-spreading activities in the state courts. Some limited jury trials have resumed in parts of the state using remote technology for all or part of the proceedings.

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