

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

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

Case No. 4:95mc40111

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has warned of the evolving 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 and anticipation 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 finds it 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 Operation Plan, all Court staff have been issued equipment to allow them to effectively telework from home or other secure location and all staff have received assistance testing that equipment to ensure remote connectivity.
2. Jury trials and grand jury proceedings have been cancelled for the month of March.
3. Naturalization ceremonies have been cancelled for the months of March and April.
4. Pursuant to this Court's March 16, 2020, Administrative Order, (Dkt. 341), Central Violations Bureau (CVB) initial appearances have been cancelled for the months of March, April, and May.
5. In-person hearings, when possible, have been converted to telephonic or video conference hearings.

6. To prepare for the need to hold hearings with incarcerated individuals without transporting those individuals to a Court location, Clerk's Office staff have worked with the United States Marshals Service and the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to ensure the existence of video conference equipment and the infrastructure needed to hold video conference hearings with incarcerated individuals from within BOP facilities.

7. Pursuant to this Court's March 20, 2020, Administrative Order, (Dkt. 343), all Court locations within the Northern District of Florida have been closed to the public, except for those individuals who are required to attend in-person hearings, trials, or other necessary matters before the Court.

8. Effective March 20, 2020, all Court staff, except for those required to assist with emergency matters, have been directed to telework.

9. Effective March 20, 2020, pursuant to this Court's Administrative Order (Dkt. 344) all initial appearances, detention hearings, and arraignments are being held by video conference.

10. Although Court facilities have been 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.

The Court recognizes that this is a rapidly evolving situation and will issue additional Administrative Orders as necessary based on recommendations from other federal and state government and health officials.

DONE AND ORDERED this 23rd day of March, 2020.

s/ Mark E. Walker
Chief United States District Judge