

THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2007-011

EMERGENCY PLAN FOR THE COLUMBIA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Whereas, the judiciary, Court Administration, Clerk of Court, the State Attorney, and the Public Defender should be ready to react to emergency situations at the Columbia County Courthouse as they arise, both to protect the public and court staff and to limit interference with court operations; and

Whereas, Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2) authorizes the Chief Judge to exercise administrative supervision over all courts within the Third Judicial Circuit. It is therefore

ORDERED that the following emergency plan is hereby adopted:

DEFINITIONS AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Chief Judge has overall authority and responsibility for all emergency situations and the evacuation of the Columbia County Courthouse (“Columbia Courthouse”).
2. Generally, the Chief Judge or Acting Chief Judge is the Emergency Judge for emergency situations arising in the Columbia Courthouse.
3. An “unpredictable immediate emergency” is defined as a real and present dangerous situation that requires immediate action. An unpredictable immediate emergency can include a fire, a bomb, or other serious and immediate threats to the safety of the Columbia Courthouse occupants and visitors. When there is an unpredictable immediate emergency, Court Security will be responsible for the immediate implementation of the emergency plan, without input from the Chief Judge or the Emergency Judge.
4. “Imminent emergencies” are unspecified threats occurring within a time period that does not allow the Court Emergency Management Team (CEMT) to convene.

Such emergencies can include unspecified bomb threats, rapidly changing weather conditions or the sudden arrival of protesters. Court Security will inform the Emergency Judge of an imminent emergency. Imminent emergencies will be handled by the Emergency Judge, the Court Administrator, the Clerk of Court, and Court Security. If the Emergency Judge is not available, the most senior circuit judge available in the Columbia Courthouse will act as the Emergency Judge.

5. A “predictable emergency” is defined as one where Court Security receives advance notice of an emergency. When predictable emergencies arise in relation to the Columbia Courthouse, Court Security will inform the Emergency Judge. The Emergency Judge will convene the Columbia County Court Emergency Management Team (“CEMT”) comprised of the Chief Judge (or Acting Chief Judge), the Court Administrator, the Columbia County Sheriff’s Office Court Security (“Court Security”) Supervisor, the Clerk of Court, and the Court Operations Manager. If directed to convene, the CEMT will meet in the Chief Judge’s hearing room located on the second floor of the Columbia Courthouse.

6. Court Security will notify the Lake City Police Department and Columbia County Facilities Management Department (“Facilities Department”) Manager of the emergency as soon as possible.

7. In a predictable emergency, the Emergency Judge will have the final authority to decide whether or not to implement the emergency plan, after consulting with the CEMT.

8. In the event that the Emergency Judge directs the closure of the Columbia Courthouse due to an emergency, the Emergency Judge will establish the time period for the closure and direct the CEMT to implement the Court’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), which includes the notification of the appropriate personnel of the closure by the Court’s Public Information Officer.

9. Under the authority of the Emergency Judge, Court Security is responsible for implementing procedures for fire alarms, bomb threats, and hostage situations. The Facilities Department is responsible for implementing the procedures for inclement weather.

10. Court Security is responsible for implementing this Administrative Order throughout the Columbia Courthouse, and after consultation with the Chief Judge, shall devise a schedule to periodically test and evaluate this plan in cooperation with the other entities involved in the implementation of the plan.

11. Court Security will keep a copy of the Columbia Courthouse blueprints in the Security Office.

EVACUATION PLAN

12. Upon notice that the Columbia Courthouse must be evacuated, all Columbia Courthouse personnel must exit the Columbia Courthouse as quickly and safely as possible using the nearest exit. Use of the elevators is prohibited. Depending on the type of threat, Court Security may re-direct exiting personnel from a particular exit location.

13. The Court's Public Information Officer will contact court staff in the Bank of America to alert them of the evacuation of the Courthouse.

14. All staff evacuating the Columbia Courthouse, except as provided below, will report to the Elk's Lodge parking lot, located at 309 N. Hernando Street, on the North side of the Columbia Courthouse.

15. Judges shall evacuate using the closest stairwell and congregate in the judicial parking lot. A Court Security Deputy will direct or escort the Judges to the Bank of America, 116 NW Madison Street, Second Floor, Court Administration Conference Room. The Court Operations Manager shall evacuate with the Judges and maintain radio contact with the Command Post.

16. If court is in session, the Deputy Clerk located in the courtroom will be responsible for securing all items which have been placed into evidence. Clerks working a jury trial shall exit with the jury and the Court Security Deputy assigned to the trial. The assigned Court Security Deputy will escort the jury and the trial clerk(s) to the City Hall Commission Room, 2nd Floor, 205 North Marion Street, and remain there for further instructions from the Court Security Supervisor. If the City Hall Commission Room is unavailable, the Court Security Deputy will escort the jury to the Court Administration break room located in the Bank of America building, 116 NW Madison Street.

17. Inmates shall be moved to secure holding for accounting then moved through the back of the courtroom to the secure corridor and escorted into the holding area secure vehicle sally port for secure holding and/or transportation to a safe and secure location, away from the Columbia Courthouse, to be determined by Court Security.

18. Court Security is responsible for establishing and maintaining a ledger which will identify all disabled persons and their location while in the Columbia Courthouse. Court Security is responsible for assisting all disabled persons in the Columbia Courthouse to the evacuation area.

19. Any staff person who believes that there is a person known to have been in the Columbia County Courthouse but cannot be located upon evacuation, should report this information to Court Security.

20. The Court Security Supervisor shall assign Court Security deputies to assist with the evacuation to the designated areas. Court Security is responsible for ensuring that everyone has been evacuated from the Columbia Courthouse.

21. The State Attorney's Office is responsible for ensuring the safe evacuation of their witnesses. The Public Defender is responsible for ensuring the safe evacuation of their witnesses.

22. A Command Post, consisting of the CEMT and a Facilities representative, shall be established at City Hall, drive through area, 205 North Marion Street.

23. Court Security deputies and Facilities Management personnel are responsible for examining the Columbia Courthouse prior to building re-entry. Court Security shall consult with the Emergency Judge prior to permitting re-entry. No one will be allowed to be in the immediate proximity of the Columbia Courthouse until the Columbia Courthouse has been cleared for re-entry, except those directly involved in the implementation of this plan.

24. When the order to re-enter the Columbia Courthouse is given, only judges, judicial assistants, Court Administration staff, Clerk of Court staff, State Attorney staff, and Public Defender staff shall re-enter the Columbia Courthouse through the main entrance. After employees have reported to their assigned work areas, the public will be allowed to re-enter the building through the main entrance.

25. During an emergency evacuation, the assigned Duty Judge shall be considered to be on-duty and shall carry his or her cellular telephone to the designated evacuation site.

BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

26. A Columbia County Sheriff's Office "Bomb Threat Card" shall be located at every office phone in the Courthouse.

27. Any employee stationed in the Columbia Courthouse who receives a bomb threat, should pay careful attention to what the individual says. The receiver of a bomb threat call should attempt to ascertain the following information:

- Where the bomb is located
- What time the device is set to detonate
- Description of the device
- Approximate age, gender and attitude of the caller
- Any peculiar accent, speech or characteristics of the caller
- Any distinguishing sounds or background noises
- Any described reason the device was placed
- The initial phone number which was called

When the phone call is completed, the receiver of a bomb threat should immediately notify Court Security at 386-719-7579. The person receiving the call shall complete the "Bomb Threat Card" and the information shall be handled as evidence.

28. Court Security shall immediately inform the Columbia County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad ("Bomb Squad") of the bomb threat. The Bomb Squad will be responsible for the actual removal of the device, if a device or suspect package is located.

29. If time allows, the CEMT will convene to discuss evacuation of the building. If evacuation is ordered by the Emergency Judge, Court Security will notify the Court Administrator's Office, Clerk of the Court, State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Department of Corrections, Facilities Management, Columbia County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division Commander, and Lake City Fire Rescue Department of the implementation of the Bomb Threat Plan.

30. Court Security will notify occupants of the Columbia Courthouse of an evacuation order by activating the fire alarm or a portable alarm system. Staff members are directed to visually search their work areas including ceiling tiles to ascertain if any unidentifiable objects are present. Staff members should not touch, move or otherwise disturb any suspicious objects, but should immediately notify Court Security of the "suspicious object." Employees should close their office doors and leave the doors unlocked.

31. Each supervisor should ensure an orderly evacuation from the building, direct staff to the Elk's Lodge parking lot, located on the North side of the Columbia Courthouse, and should ensure an accounting of all personnel known to be in the building.

32. The Lake City Police Department shall secure the perimeter of the Columbia Courthouse with at least a one block or 300-foot setback. Lake City Police shall also secure appropriate adjacent streets.

FIRE ALARM PROCEDURES

33. All employees should familiarize themselves with the location of fire alarms. Upon noticing a fire, Columbia Courthouse employees shall pull the fire alarm and call Court Security.

34. Everyone should evacuate the building immediately after hearing the alarm, using the nearest exits, not the elevator, and shall report to the designated evacuation area as described above in the evacuation plan. If employees notice fire or smoke while evacuating the building, they shall report the location of the fire or smoke to a supervisor after safely exiting the building. Employees should close their office doors and leave the doors unlocked.

35. Court Security deputies in the courtrooms shall direct the courtroom occupants to exit the building in an orderly manner and as provided in the evacuation plan.

HOSTAGE AND CRISIS SITUATION PROCEDURES

36. Any Columbia Courthouse employee with knowledge of a hostage situation or an active threat shall notify Court Security immediately. Court Security shall contain the area as soon and as safely as possible and commence an emergency lock down. Court Security will immediately notify the Emergency Judge and the Columbia County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division Commander. The Emergency Judge will determine whether the evacuation plan should be implemented after consulting with the CEMT.

37. The Court Security Supervisor will request sufficient law enforcement personnel to effect a safe and secure containment, evacuation, and resolution.

38. If the Emergency Judge has directed the evacuation plan to be implemented, Court Security will evacuate the building beginning with the area closest to the hostage or crisis situation. All other procedures in the Evacuation Plan will remain the

same. All evacuated employees shall report to the designated evacuation sites using the nearest exits, not the elevators.

39. Anyone with information about the hostage situation will personally report that information to the nearest Court Security officer.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

40. The Chief Judge, after consulting with the CEMT and the Columbia County Department of Emergency Management, will decide whether or not to close the Columbia Courthouse due to severe inclement weather.

41. If the Chief Judge orders closure, the Court's Public Information Office will alert the appropriate persons and the COOP shall be implemented. If time permits, employees will turn off all appliances and lights, and secure all important papers in file cabinets or drawers before evacuating the building.

42. In the event of imminent danger all employees will immediately evacuate to the first floor of the Columbia Courthouse, Public Defender Conference Room. Court Security will then direct employees to the safest location.

43. Before employees are excused, each department's supervisor will collect a list of volunteers to return after the weather has cleared to clean up the building and to inventory damage.

44. A taped message on the Court Administrator's office number, (386) 754-7026, shall be used to inform employees when volunteers should report and when the Columbia Courthouse will re-open if it appears that the building will be closed for more than one day.

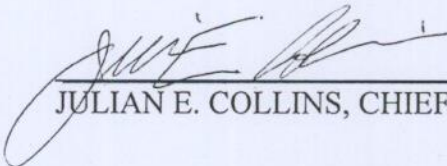
EMERGENCY PERSONNEL PROFILES

45. All employees who work for Court Administration, the Columbia County Clerk of Court, the State Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and the Columbia County Sheriff's Office and who are assigned to the Columbia Courthouse will

complete an Emergency Personnel Profile Form which will be kept in a secure location by the employee's personnel office. The Emergency Personnel Profile Forms will be updated each January and when an employer reports a change. Court Security will be notified when an individual terminates employment. Upon termination of employment, the Emergency Personnel Profile will be destroyed by the employee's personnel office in accordance with record retention requirements.

46. This order is effective immediately.

DONE AND ORDERED in Lake City, Columbia County, Florida, on this 27th day of June, 2007.



JULIAN E. COLLINS, CHIEF JUDGE