

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA,
IN AND FOR COLUMBIA, DIXIE, HAMILTON, LAFAYETTE, MADISON,
SUWANNEE AND TAYLOR COUNTIES**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2025-006

(Supersedes AO 2014-011)

IN RE: USE OF COURT FACILITIES

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WHEREAS, pursuant to Article V, Section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, the Chief Judge is responsible for the administrative supervision of the courts in their circuit; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit is charged with regulating the use of all court facilities pursuant to Rule 2.215, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration and section 43.26, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the court facilities over which the Chief Judge regulates use include all courtrooms, hearing rooms, grand jury rooms, petit jury rooms, mediation facilities, deposition rooms, attorney conference rooms, and other offices used primarily by the judiciary or court administration and located within the courthouses and courthouse annexes within the Third Judicial Circuit, and any other facilities described in section 29.008 (1)(a), Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, in order to facilitate minimum standards of security for the public, public officials, public employees, and accountability in regard to the use of court facilities;

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. Except as set forth herein, any organization, entity, group, or individual (applicant) that seeks the use of court facilities, the use of which is regulated by the Chief Judge, shall:
 - a. Contact the Sheriff of the county to request entry and to arrange an adequate security detail for the proposed use and obtain written proof thereof;
 - b. Make written request to the Trial Court Administrator with the following information (preferably 7 days in advance):
 - i. The name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address of the applicant seeking such use;
 - ii. A copy of a valid driver's license or other Florida ID;
 - iii. The purpose, requested date, time, and duration of such use; and

- iv. Documentation of the Sheriff's agreement to provide adequate security during the proposed use.
- c. Receive written permission for such use from the Chief Judge or the Chief Judge's designee(s).
2. Except as otherwise provided by law, any user of court facilities may be assessed a fee by the county in which the facility is located, including any additional direct costs, such as utilities or security, that are incurred by a county as a result of such use.
3. Prior to the use of any court facilities, a user must confirm entry via the Sheriff of that county, an on-duty Sheriff's deputy assigned as a courthouse security officer (bailiff), or another Sheriff's designee, and shall present a sufficient identification document (as determined by the Sheriff or his/her designee), and the written authority as required and described herein containing the original signature of the Chief Judge or the Chief Judge's designee. The Sheriff or his/her designee may also permit access if, in addition to appropriate identification, they are in possession of a copy of such written authority that is provided by the Chief Judge, the designee, or Court Administration directly, or by electronic means to the Sheriff or his/her designee.
4. Unless otherwise provided in a separate administrative order, for purposes of granting permission as set forth in paragraph 1.b. above, each of the county judges and circuit judges having jurisdiction in the Third Judicial Circuit shall be the Chief Judge's designees for the respective county in which they maintain their primary judicial office.
5. The requirements set forth above in this order do not apply to the following, unless otherwise stated¹ below:
 - a. The regular and customary use of court facilities by the judiciary or Court Administration.
 - b. The use of court facilities by the County Commissions, Clerks of Court, or Supervisors of Elections which do not conflict with court proceedings upon the issuance of a Sheriff's security agreement referenced in paragraph 1.a., above, and upon sufficient advance notice to the Chief Judge.
 - c. The regular and customary use of court facilities by the attorneys or investigators employed by the offices of the State Attorney or Public Defender of the Third

¹ Any request to use a court facility outside of its normal business hours must be accompanied by the Sheriff's authorization referenced in paragraph 1.a, of this order.

Judicial Circuit or Regional Civil and Conflict Counsel assigned to representations in the Third Judicial Circuit.

- d. Use of any conference rooms customarily used by attorneys for client conferences during or immediately prior to or after hearings or trials but only for client conferences during which the Sheriff or deputies assigned to court security are in the immediate vicinity of the conference room and have, prior to that use, been requested for use and access by the attorney.
- e. The use of court facilities for civil depositions or mediations involving private attorneys and/or pro se litigants that are properly noticed and scheduled through the local county or circuit court, Court Administration, or other authority responsible for scheduling the facility, and only to the extent that the county allows private civil depositions or mediations and subject to any fees charged by a county for private use of that facility. Regardless, the Sheriff or his or her designee must be noticed in advance of such use.
- f. The presence of any individual in a courtroom or hearing room who is directly involved in a case that has been convened by a judge, magistrate, or hearing officer having jurisdiction over that case, and such direct involvement is as an attorney, party, witness, or victim in that case, unless otherwise lawfully restricted or limited by law including the lawful order of the presiding judge, magistrate, or hearing officer.
- g. The presence of any law enforcement officer authorized by the Sheriff of the county in which the court facility is located.
- h. The use of a county facility by a Board of County Commissioners, which is primarily used by a county for non-court purposes but allowed to be used as a court facility by agreement with Court Administration for the Third Judicial Circuit (i.e., annex).
- i. The presence of the general public during court proceedings allowed by law for purposes of observing such proceedings allowed by law for purposes of observing such proceedings, unless otherwise restricted or limited by law, including the lawful order of the presiding judge, magistrate, or hearing officer.
- j. The required presence of any custodians or maintenance personnel which are under the employment, supervision, direction, or contract of or with the county,

Clerk of Court, or Court Administration, for which adequate provisions for security have been arranged with the Sheriff or his/her designee.

6. In no event shall there be permitted any use or assembly of persons in any court facility whose purpose in using the court facility is to convene, promote, or conduct any type of grand jury proceedings other than those lawfully convened under and governed by Chapter 905 of the Florida Statutes or to commit any subversive activity that is forbidden by Florida or federal law.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers in Lake City, Columbia County, Florida, and effective this 1st day of October, 2025.



Melissa Gates Olin, Chief Judge

Copies:

All Clerks in Third Judicial Circuit
Chairpersons of County Commissions in Third Judicial Circuit
All Sheriffs in Third Judicial Circuit
All Judges in Third Judicial Circuit
State Attorney, Third Judicial Circuit
Public Defender, Third Judicial Circuit
President of Third Circuit Bar Association
Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, First Region