

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR INDIAN RIVER, MARTIN, OKEECHOBEE, AND ST. LUCIE COUNTIES  
STATE OF FLORIDA

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2021-14**

**IN RE: CONTINUED COVID-19 REOPENING PROCEDURES AND COURT  
OPERATIONS- SECOND PROTOCOLS**

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020 the Florida Supreme Court issued its first Administrative Order relating to the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>1</sup> (when the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a declaration of a public health emergency and by extension a declaration of a state of emergency in Florida) followed by the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit issuing its first Administrative Order related to the COVID-19 pandemic on March 19, 2020<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, multiple subsequent administrative orders have been issued by the Florida Supreme Court and this Circuit implementing temporary measures to address the pandemic in order to keep the courts operating to the fullest extent possible consistent with public safety; and

WHEREAS, as a result of increasing new COVID-19 variant cases throughout the nation, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) revised its health guidance for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons on July 27, 2021, and as a result thereof the Florida Supreme Court issued AOSC21-17, *Amendment* requiring certain health and safety protocols and otherwise amending protocols for in-person and remote court proceedings be implemented in all courts by August 2, 2021; and

WHEREAS, this court entered AO 2021-11 regarding Continued COVID-19 reopening Procedures and Court Operations-Second Protocols on August 2, 2021; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 positivity rates throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit are such that the continued reduction of the courthouse footprint is necessary for the continued effective operation of the judicial system, consistent with AOSC21-17-Amendment 1's mandate to utilize available trial court resources and facility space in conducting in-person proceedings as prioritized therein;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority of the Chief Judge under section 43.26, Florida Statutes, and Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, and Florida Supreme Court Administrative Order AOSC21-17-*Amendment 1*;

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<sup>1</sup> See AOSC 20-15

<sup>2</sup> See Nineteenth Judicial Circuit AO 2020-01

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

**Effective September 20, 2021:**

- 1) All civil cases to be tried by jury must be able to be commenced and completed within one calendar week. All civil cases that would reasonably be expected to exceed this amount of time shall not be set for trial until directed by further administrative order or, if presently set for trial, shall be stricken from their currently scheduled trial date.
  
- 2) Notwithstanding the foregoing, all civil cases presently set for trial after January 1, 2022 which exceed one calendar week shall remain docketed but subject to further administrative review and direction.

DONE AND ORDERED at Ft. Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida, this 15th day of September, 2021.



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Charles Schwab  
Chief Judge