

IN THE COURTS OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

THE STATE OF FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2020-11

RE: ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FOR CRIMINAL COMPETENCY HEARINGS

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic, the Governor of Florida has declared a state of emergency exists, and the Surgeon General and State Health Officer have declared a public emergency exists; and

WHEREAS, the Florida State Courts System must continue to take steps to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the courts, court participants, and the general public; and

WHEREAS, by order of the Supreme Court of Florida AOSC20-17, the chief judges of circuit courts are authorized to direct judges to hold competency hearings as soon as practicable after the date of filing of a motion to determine competency, and to authorize judges to allow experts and attorneys to conduct and attend competency evaluations by remote means, if practicable;

NOW THEREFORE, it is

ORDERED:

1. When exigencies make it impossible to meet the twenty (20) day time period in Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.210(b), all judges in the First Judicial Circuit are hereby directed to hold competency hearings as soon as practicable after the date of filing a motion to determine competency.

2. All judges in the First Judicial Circuit are hereby authorized to allow experts and attorneys to conduct and attend competency evaluations by remote means, if practicable.

3. These modified court procedures shall remain in place through the close of business on Friday, April 17, 2020, or as provided by subsequent order.

DONE AND ORDERED in Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida, this 30th day of March, 2020.



JOHN L. MILLER
CHIEF JUDGE

Copies furnished to:

All Judges, First Judicial Circuit

All Clerks, First Judicial Circuit

William Eddins, State Attorney, First Judicial Circuit

Bruce Miller, Public Defender, First Judicial Circuit

Kasey Watson, Public Information Officer

Robin Wright, Trial Court Administrator

Elizabeth Miller, Child Welfare Legal Services/Department of Children and Families

Mark Jones, Families First Network

Bryan Carter, Guardian Ad Litem Program

Candice Brower, Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel

Justice Administration Commission

For Broadcast by: Escambia-Santa Rosa Bar Association

For Broadcast by: Okaloosa Bar Association

For Broadcast by: Walton County Bar Association

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