



*First Judicial Circuit*  
*Robin Wright, Court Administrator*

*Court Administration*

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*190 Governmental Center; Pensacola, FL 32502 \* TEL (850) 595-4400 / FAX (850) 595-0360*

**For Immediate Release:**

*Re: Enhanced Screening for COVID-19 to be Implemented for Escambia County and Santa Rosa County Courthouses*

The Florida state courts remain committed to taking all practical and available measures to mitigate the effect of COVID-19 on court proceedings, while continuing to operate to the fullest extent possible consistent with public safety. The Supreme Court of Florida has recently issued AOSC20-32, which incorporates the recommendations of the COVID-19 Court Operations Subgroup, relative to the court system's transition to more in-person hearings.

During the unprecedented circumstances presented by the pandemic, the judges of the First Judicial Circuit have handled hundreds of cases through electronic means, and will continue to do so in many cases. Most face-to-face hearings remain limited at this time. For those cases which must be handled face-to-face, extraordinary measures have been taken to ensure the safety of the public, court staff, and other agency partners within our facilities. Processes will continue to evolve as circumstances warrant.

*ESCAMBIA COUNTY*

To help ensure that no person infected with COVID-19 enters the court facilities, temperature scanning devices have been installed at the M.C. Blanchard Building and the Theodore Bruno Building. Effective Monday, June 1, any person attempting to enter either of these facilities will undergo a non-invasive temperature scan by walking through a defined area. The installed devices will automatically record the temperature of each individual. Any individual who registers a temperature of 100.4 or higher will be denied access to the building. Individuals attempting to enter the courthouse should also expect to be asked a series of questions regarding potential symptoms or prior exposure to COVID-19. Refusal of the temperature screening or refusal to answer screening questions will result in denial of access to the building. At this time, courthouse access remains limited to those persons who are required for court proceedings, or those individuals with other official business within the courthouse facilities. Those entering the facilities will be required to wear a mask at all times while entering and while within the building.

*SANTA ROSA COUNTY*

In Santa Rosa County, persons attempting to enter the courthouse should also expect to undergo a non-invasive temperature check beginning on Monday, June 1. Screening questions regarding potential symptoms or prior exposure to COVID-19 will be asked upon entry.

Refusal of the temperature screening or to answer screening questions will result in denial of access to the building. Signage will be posted regarding the maintenance of proper social distancing, and those entering the courthouse will be required to wear a mask at all times while entering and while within the building. Plastic bins have been removed from the security checkpoint, and each person will be given a clear bag to place personal belongings in for screening. At this time, courthouse access remains limited to those persons who are required for court proceedings, or those individuals with other official business within the courthouse facilities.

*OKALOOSA and WALTON COUNTIES*

Information as to similar measures to be taken in the remaining counties of the First Judicial Circuit will be released as soon as it is available.