

**THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**CASE NO. 20-1
(Court Administration)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 20-07**

**IN RE: COVID-19 EMERGENCY
PROCEDURES REGARDING USE OF
ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN REMOTE
COURTROOM PROCEEDINGS IN THE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF
FLORIDA**

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of Florida promulgated standards of conduct and technology, codified in the Rules of Judicial Administration (Rules), subject at all times to the authority of the presiding judge to: (i) control the proceedings before the court; (ii) ensure decorum and prevent distractions; and (iii) ensure the fair administration of justice in the pending cause; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Order Nos. 20-04 and 20-05, non-essential hearings that can be effectively conducted remotely through communication equipment without in-person court appearances are no longer suspended, and mission critical court matters shall also be conducted remotely through communication equipment, unless the presiding judge determines that an in-person court appearance is necessary;

WHEREAS, it is necessary to adapt the guidelines set forth in Administrative Order No. 14-02, governing the use of electronic devices in court proceedings, for use in remote court proceedings via communication equipment;

WHEREAS, the definitions stated in Administrative Order No. 14-02 are hereby

incorporated by reference;

WHEREAS, usage of electronic devices by certain individuals, including media attendees, involved in or attending court proceedings is necessary in order to perform their professional obligations or to record such proceedings for further legal proceedings, guidelines should be established for such usage.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, pursuant to Rule 2.215, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, it is hereby **ORDERED**:

1. **Limitations on use of Electronic Devices During Remote Court Proceedings.** Subject at all times to the authority and prior approval of the Presiding Judge:

- a. During remote court proceedings conducted through communication equipment, electronic devices may not be used by anyone for photography, videography, or audio recording of the court proceeding unless the individual has prior approval from the Presiding Judge. Such devices include, but are not limited to cell phones, cameras, computers, laptops, tablets, digital voice recorders or similar technical devices.
- b. Media, court staff, attorneys, court liaisons, police officers on duty, and members of the public should be allowed to use certain electronic devices (i.e., cellphones) for sending and receiving written information only (i.e., email, text messages, instant messages). All cell phones and electronic recording devices must be turned off or switched to silent or vibrate mode. The privilege of using a cellphone or other devices may be revoked at any time by the Presiding Judge if such use becomes disruptive in any way.
- c. In addition to laptops or tablets with virtual, silent keyboards, laptops or tablets with

regular keyboards should be allowed so long as they do not create distracting noise.

The Presiding Judge shall have the exclusive authority to determine whether the sound from the laptop or tablet is distracting.

2. **Media Access.** Media, Professional Journalists, and persons acting in a news gathering capacity who do not meet the definition of professional journalist set forth in AO 14-02, should contact the Court's Public Information Officer at least one day in advance to obtain information for access to remote court proceedings being conducted through communication equipment.
3. **Public Access.** For remote access to hearings that are required to be open to the public, members of the public may contact the Presiding Judge's Chambers at least one day in advance to obtain information regarding access for a specific hearing.
4. **Violations and Enforcement.** Anyone violating this Administrative Order will be subject to the discipline of the Court, including, but not limited to, the Court's contempt authority.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers in Miami-Dade County, Florida, this 3rd day of April 2020.

**BERTILA SOTO, CHIEF JUDGE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**