

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN  
AND FOR SUMTER COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: S-2022-50**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER REGARDING SECURITY OF THE  
SUMTER COUNTY JUDICIAL CENTER AND THE CLERK'S  
OFFICE BUILDING**

**WHEREAS** the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Sumter County, Florida are of paramount concern to the Court; and

**WHEREAS** tragic incidents have taken place in court facilities in Florida and in the United States resulting in serious injuries and loss of life; and

**WHEREAS** proceedings taking place within the Sumter County Judicial Center and the Clerk's Office Building can be fraught with extreme emotion and potentially present extreme danger to Court and Clerk personnel, litigants, and the public; and

**WHEREAS** the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners has appropriated and continues to appropriate funds for the purpose of improving the safety and security of those persons who conduct business within the Sumter County Judicial Center and the Clerk's Office Building, including citizens and employees alike; and

**WHEREAS** the Chief Judge, and other judge(s) that he may designate, is responsible for the administration of the courts within the Fifth Judicial Circuit, as provided in §30.15 (4)(a), Florida Statutes; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Judge is required to regulate the use of all court facilities, pursuant to Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(7); and

**WHEREAS**, the Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services Division deputies, employees and contractors are officers of the court when providing security for the Courthouse facility/complex

pursuant to Section 30.15(4)(b), Florida Statutes; and

**WHEREAS**, the undersigned, the Honorable Michelle Morley, has been designated Administrative Judge for Sumter County, pursuant to Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215 (b)(5),

It is therefore **ORDERED** that access to the Sumter County Judicial Center and the Clerk's Office Building shall be regulated as follows:

**I. ACCESS TO COURTHOUSE:**

The Sumter County Judicial Center including the Clerk's and State Attorney's Offices (hereinafter referred to as Courthouse Facilities) are designated as Secure Facilities.

**1. Entrance:**

**a. Public:**

The public shall enter the building through the main entrance located on the north side at 215 E. McCollum Ave, Bushnell, FL 33513.

**b. Employees:**

Employees may only use the designated employee entrances or the main entrance at 215 E. McCollum Ave, Bushnell, FL 33513 unless prior approval from their department head and the supervisor over Court Services from the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, has been granted. Emergency exits may only be used in the event of an emergency or with prior approval of Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services Division.

**c. Vendors:**

All vendors must use the main entrance located at 215 E. McCollum Ave, Bushnell, FL 33513 unless there has been prior approval from Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services

Division. Vendors must display proper identification while in or on Courthouse Facilities and are subject to search at the discretion of the Court's bailiffs.

**d. Mail and package deliveries**

- i. USPS, FedEx, UPS, DSL, and any similar company providing non- vendor delivery services to the Courthouse Facilities, are not permitted to leave unattended packages within the Courthouse. This means that any package intended for delivery to a judge, Court Administration personnel, Clerk's Office personnel, the State Attorney's Office, or Sheriff may not be left unattended in front of courtrooms, the entry to Court Administrative Offices, a judge's office, the Clerk's Office, the State Attorney's Office, or any public area.
- ii. A package may not be left unattended outside the courthouse after hours and/or weekends.
- iii. All packages entering the building shall be inspected and scanned through the X-ray machine if capable of doing so.

**2. Screening and Prohibited Items:**

All persons entering the main entrance of the Courthouse Facilities will pass through a magnetometer for the purpose of preventing entry by persons in possession of prohibited firearms, weapons, and other objects that could be used, or perceived to be used as a physical threat to persons or property to assure the safety of witnesses, jurors, members of the judiciary and others present throughout the Courthouse Complex. Handheld metal detectors may be used in the event of exigent circumstances, such as a power failure or other needs. Any briefcase, container, package, purse, pocketbook, wallet, belts, and similar items shall be placed on the conveyer belt and submit to security personnel for visual inspection.

Searches shall be conducted by the least intrusive means possible. Any person who refuses to submit to a search conducted in accordance with the procedures for security shall be denied access.

**a. Public/Employees:**

- i. No firearms, ammunition, or firearm magazines or any other item determined to be a weapon by Courthouse Security, is allowed in the Courthouse Facilities unless otherwise provided for herein. Persons not authorized under provisions of this order to be in possession of prohibited objects will be denied entry into the Courthouse Complex. However, all personal belongings which would constitute a non-firearm weapon may be surrendered or returned to the owner's vehicle.
- ii. Any person found to be illegally in possession of any prohibited object or in possession of any illegal object or substance will be subject to arrest.
- iii. Employees within the Courthouse Facilities, vendors, delivery persons or other workers on official business and with a specific need for certain tools while working within the Courthouse Facilities are permitted to possess those tools necessary to complete their official business within the Courthouse Facilities, with prior approval from Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services Division. All tools and equipment shall remain monitored and/or securely stored when not in use.

**b. Law Enforcement:**

- i. As used in this section, "law enforcement officer" means all persons holding an active certification from the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission as a law enforcement officer or a correctional officer as defined in § 943.10(1), (2), (6), (7), (8), or (9) and who are elected, employed, or appointed as full-time, part-time,

or auxiliary/reserve law enforcement officer or correctional officer.

**ii.** All law enforcement officers who are authorized by law to carry firearms shall be entitled to remain armed while in the Courthouse Facilities under the following conditions:

**a.)** they are on official business, **and**

**b.)** all non-concealed firearms shall be in a “retention-style” holster.

**c.)** Law enforcement Officers and Employees of the State Attorney’s Office, who are legally authorized to carry a weapon must submit to screening but may at the conclusion of screening present valid identification and continue on with official courthouse business.

**iii.** Courthouse Facilities Security personnel shall make inquiry of each officer as to whether the law enforcement officer is in the building on official, non-official, or personal business and may request information sufficient to ascertain the nature of the law enforcement officer’s business.

**iv.** A law enforcement officer who is not on official business, but who is authorized to carry firearms on or about his/her persons while off-duty pursuant to Florida Statute 790.052, shall NOT be entitled to remain armed while in the Courthouse Facilities. For such officers, the following procedure applies:

a.)The law enforcement officer shall be permitted to enter the courthouse with a firearm. However, prior to the law enforcement officer being permitted to pass through security, Courthouse Security shall notify the Sheriff’s personnel. The

Sheriff's personnel shall escort the law enforcement officer from the entrance to the bailiff's office, where the law enforcement officer shall be permitted to store his/her firearm(s) while he/she conducts non-official or personal business, including but not limited to, appearing in court as a party. At the conclusion of his/her business in the Courthouse Facility, the law enforcement officer shall be permitted to retrieve his/her firearm from secure storage and shall thereafter immediately exit the Courthouse Facility through the public entry/exit point in the vestibule.

- v. If the law enforcement officer has entered the Courthouse Facility for the purpose of non-official or personal business and has not been authorized by his/her superior officers to carry firearms on or about his/her person while off-duty pursuant to Florida Statute 790.052, he/she shall NOT be permitted to carry his/her firearm in the Courthouse Facility and instead must secure the weapon in his/her vehicle.
- vi. Any non-uniformed law enforcement officer or employee of the State Attorney's Office carrying a firearm, who appears in any courtroom, shall keep their firearm secure on their person at all times and shall promptly notify a bailiff and/or the presiding judge that he/she has a firearm on or about their person.

## **II. AFTER HOURS ACCESS TO COURTHOUSE:**

- a. The Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services Division must be notified of any meeting occurring outside of normal business hours. Additionally, a list of all attendees must be provided to Courthouse Security prior to close of business on the day scheduled for the meeting.

- b. Anyone wishing to enter Courthouse Facilities outside of normal business hours must contact the Sumter County Facilities Department at 352-689-4400 and notify Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services Division prior to entering Courthouse Facilities.
- c. Sumter County employees with the proper credentials and approved access rights may access the courthouse through any service entrance door as needed to perform their work function.

### **III. COURTHOUSE DECORUM:**

All persons entering Courthouse Facilities shall be appropriately attired. Each individual Judge shall make a determination as to any dress code applicable to his or her individual courtroom and shall so advise the courthouse security staff as to those limitations.

### **IV. SMOKING:**

The Courthouse Facilities are designated non-smoking, and smoking shall not be permitted within Courthouse Facilities. This includes the use of E-Cigarettes, Vaping and/or other smoking accessories.

### **V. SOLICITATION, LEAFLETING AND DEMONSTRATIONS:**

Commercial, charitable and/or private solicitation and/or leafleting is not permitted within the public areas of the Courthouse Facilities. Political activity such as campaigning is prohibited on courthouse property.

No one shall parade, stand, move in procession, and/or display a flag, banner, or device inside the Courthouse Facilities with the intent to bring public notice to any party, organization, or movement.

### **VI. REFRESHMENT CENTER:**

No food or drink shall be permitted in any courtroom unless allowed by specific request upon the judge presiding in the particular courtroom. In all areas of the courthouse facility, only drinks in non-spill containers are allowed.

## **VII. ELECTRONIC DEVICES:**

**a. Electronic Devices Prohibited: All electronic devices including but not limited to cameras, body worn cameras, cellular phones, pagers, personal data assistants (PDA), laptop computers, tape recorders, smart watches, etc., are prohibited from being brought into the Courthouse Facility with the following exceptions:**

- i. A request by a judge or other designated authority allowing a specific person access to the Courthouse Facility with a specific electronic device for a specific purpose and period of time; or,
- ii. Any Courthouse Facility employee (Clerk's Office, Chambers Staff, State Attorney's Office, Court Administration, Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services Division, and Contracted Security) displaying valid employee identification; or,
- iii. Any attorney or employee of the attorney's office displaying a valid identification card issued from that office; this provision includes the Public Defender's Office; or,
- iv. Any Special Agent for the United States Government, State of Florida, or other law enforcement officer authorized to enforce the law within the State of Florida, having official business within the Courthouse Facility and displaying a valid agency/department issued identification badge; or,



- v. Any attorney permitted to practice law within the State of Florida with a valid Florida Bar identification card or pro hac vice order having business within the facility. This applies to attorneys only and precludes staff, investigators, clients, etc.
- vi. Any person seeking to photograph public records as outlined in Section 119.07, Florida Statutes would be permitted entry with a conventional camera as outlined in Section 119.07 (3) (b), Florida Statutes.
- vii. Any person requiring an electronic device for medical needs who provided advance notice to the presiding judge and ADA Coordinator.<sup>1</sup>
- viii. Any law enforcement officer responding to a call for service.

**b. Recording by Electronic Devices Prohibited:** The above exceptions notwithstanding, a danger to existing security measures occurs when recording by electronic devices capture security features that are in place throughout the Courthouse Facilities, sensitive witnesses such as undercover police officers and protected witnesses who are required to appear in court, and jurors or potential jurors who are required to appear in the Courthouse. As a result of this danger to existing security measures, it is necessary to prohibit the use of electronic devices to record within the interior of the Sumter County Courthouse absent specific permission being granted in accordance with Fifth Judicial Circuit Administrative Order A-2015-07-B.

## **VIII. AUTHORITY TO VARY**

There should be few, if any, exceptions to this order.

---

<sup>1</sup> The name and contact information for the Fifth Judicial Circuit ADA Coordinator for Sumter County may be found at <https://www.circuit5.org/programs-services/americans-with-disabilities-ada-services/> or by calling 352-569-6952


Nevertheless, no order can be drawn to cover every possible factual possibility. If special circumstances arise, which parties aggrieved by this order feel warrant an exception to this order, they must consult with the supervisor of Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services Division or designee. The supervisor or designee shall have the discretion to determine procedures and methods to maintain security at the Courthouse Facilities if those procedures and methods are not contained in this order.

**IX. ENFORCEMENT:**

The Sumter County Sheriff's Office, Court Services Division and staff are directed to enforce this and any other specifically promulgated rules at all times.

Subjects knowing and willful violation of this Administrative Order and/or who refuse to vacate the Sumter County Courthouse premises upon request of Sumter County Sheriff's Office Court Services Division are subject to being issued a trespass warning and/or arrest.

**DONE AND ORDERED** in Chambers at, Bushnell, Sumter  
County, Florida on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of October 2022.

  
**Michelle Morley**  
**Administrative Judge**  
**Sumter County, Florida**