



ATTENTION ATTORNEYS AND PARTIES

BROWARD COUNTY COURT GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON PROCEEDINGS

In-person proceedings will be limited during the gradual transition to full in-person use of the courthouse. All counsel, parties, witnesses, and spectators will be required to follow the following guidelines to insure the safety of all, while at the same time providing for meaningful due process and access to justice. All users should be prepared for a different environment in the courtroom than existed prior to the dawn of Covid-19. The use of the courtroom will likely differ from what the user expects, so all users should be prepared to act in accordance with instructions from the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) and the judge.

Judge's Authority. While BSO will assist with physical distancing and masking requirements in the courtroom, the judge maintains ultimate authority over physical distancing and other safety issues in the courtroom, and may impose those requirements beyond the minimum set forth herein.

Masks and Other Safety Measures. All persons in the building ***MUST*** be masked at ***ALL TIMES*** in courtrooms, hearing rooms and common areas, even when speaking - that includes questioning witnesses and addressing any jury. All persons are asked to use hand sanitizer regularly and to wipe podiums and exhibit projection devices between uses.

Physical Distancing. All persons must comply with physical distancing requirements within the courtroom and follow any additional BSO directions concerning same. Attorneys, parties and witnesses should remain seated during the proceeding.

Courtroom Setup. All courtrooms will be set up with safety requirements in mind. No person is permitted to move any courtroom furniture (chairs, podium, etc.) without prior approval of the judge or BSO deputy. For jury trials, courtroom setup will include plexiglass dividers placed so that physical distancing requirements are maintained.



Persons in Courtroom. The only parties permitted in the courtroom will be the client (if a business entity, one representative only), lead counsel, and if desired, no more than one co-counsel. No additional law firm staff will be permitted in the courtroom. Other participants in the courtroom are limited to the judge, one deputy clerk, BSO personnel, the venire (if a jury trial), and one court reporter (if a civil trial).

Witnesses. At trials, whether jury or non-jury, witnesses must appear in person, but are permitted in the courtroom only while testifying. Remote appearance of witnesses will be permitted only upon written motion and order prior to the date of the proceeding.

Spectators. All other people desiring to observe court proceedings must observe via the zoom videoconference link. They will not be permitted in the courthouse or the courtroom.

Hybrid Appearances. For those hearings that have someone appear in person while others appear on zoom, in-person participants are reminded to speak into the microphones so that the remote participants will be able to hear. Additionally, in-person participants will not appear on camera to the zoom participants unless they bring their own laptop, ipad, or telephone with a camera. Without a camera, they will be heard but not seen, similar to a telephonic appearance.

Last updated: March 17, 2021