

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Administrative Order No. 2025-38-Gen

COURTHOUSE SECURITY AND SCREENING

(a) Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2) states the Chief Judge is the “administrative officer of the courts within the circuit and directs the formation and implementation of policies and priorities for the operation of all courts and officers within the circuit, consistent with branch-wide policies.”

(b) The risk of threats and acts of violence directed toward members of the general public, witnesses, jurors, litigants, lawyers, court personnel and employees, and Judges demonstrates the need for appropriate security regulations at the Broward County Courthouse, at all Broward County Courthouse satellite locations, and at all courthouse annexes.

(c) The health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Broward County are of paramount concern to the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, the Broward Sheriff’s Office, and the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit.

(d) Pursuant to Article V, section 14 (c) of the Florida Constitution and section 29.008, Florida Statutes, Broward County is required to fund the cost of security of court facilities located within Broward County, Florida. To that end, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners has appropriated funding for the purpose of establishing a security detail to improve the safety and security of all persons who enter the Broward County Courthouse, including all Broward County Courthouse satellite locations, and all courthouse annexes.

(e) In an effort to ensure the safety and security of all persons visiting the Broward County Courthouse, all Broward County Courthouse satellite locations, and all courthouse annexes, it is necessary that certain security measures and regulations be specified by Administrative Order.

(f) In accordance with the authority vested in the Chief Judge pursuant to Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, effective immediately, it is hereby **ORDERED**:

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(1) For purposes of this Administrative Order, the term “Broward County Courthouse(s)” or “Courthouse(s)” means: (1) the Broward County Central Judicial Complex located at 201 S.E. 6th Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301; (2) the North Regional Courthouse located at 1600 West Hillsboro Boulevard, Deerfield Beach, Florida 33442; (3) the West Regional Courthouse located at 100 North Pine Island Road, Plantation, Florida 33324; (4) the South Regional Courthouse located at 3550 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, Florida 33021, and (5) the Broward County Central Judicial Complex located at 540 S.E. 3rd Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301.

(2) The Broward County Courthouses are designated as Secure Facilities.

(3) All persons, with the exception of those specifically enumerated in section B(1) below, are prohibited from carrying or possessing firearms, weapons, or destructive devices, as defined in section 790.001, Florida Statutes, in any Broward County Courthouse.

(4) All persons are prohibited from carrying or being in possession of any other device(s) or instrument(s) that could be used or perceived to be used as a physical threat to persons or property, in any Broward County Courthouse. This includes, but is not limited to, any “contraband article,” as that term is defined in section 932.701, Florida Statutes. Prohibitions may include, but are not limited to pocket knives, ammunition, fireworks, caustic or flammable liquids, and other items listed on Exhibit A attached hereto.

(5) All persons seeking entry into any Broward County Courthouse, except for those specifically exempted in sections B(1) and C(1) below or persons authorized by the Chief Judge or the Broward County Sheriff’s Office Court Services District Captain, shall be subject to screening and search of his or her person and/or personal effects, including pockets, bags, briefcases, pocketbooks, purses, containers, packages, pagers, cellular telephones, electronic devices, and **any other item** deemed necessary for inspection with the use of electronic or other specialized equipment. Any person who refuses to submit to such screening or search shall be denied access to the Broward County Courthouse(s). The discovery of any illegal weapon, firearm, explosive or hazardous material, or destructive device, as defined in section 790.001, Florida Statutes, any “contraband article,” as defined in section 932.701, Florida Statutes, or any other device(s) or instrument(s) that could be used or perceived to be used as a physical threat to persons or property, or any violation

of any criminal statute will result in the immediate notification of law enforcement so that a seizure and an arrest may be effectuated.

B. FIREARM PROHIBITION EXEMPTIONS

(1) The following persons shall be exempt from the prohibition against carrying firearms into any Broward County Courthouse:

- a. All County Court and Circuit Court Judges;
- b. Sworn municipal, State, County, and Federal law enforcement officers and sworn detention deputies/correctional officers who are engaged in their official duties and who produce appropriate identification or credentials upon entry into any Broward County Courthouse; and
- c. The elected State Attorney for the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit, and any investigator(s) who are employed by the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit State Attorney and who are sworn law enforcement officers.

(2) **Law Enforcement Officers Dressed in Uniform** – Notwithstanding the above, under no circumstances is a sworn law enforcement officer dressed in uniform permitted to enter any Broward County Courthouse while possessing or carrying a weapon or firearm when said law enforcement officer is on unofficial business or attending or participating in a court proceeding in which he or she has a personal interest in the outcome, such as a matter involving a family member, relative, neighbor, or friend. Under those circumstances, if a law enforcement officer enters a Broward County Courthouse while possessing or carrying a weapon or firearm, the law enforcement officer must surrender his or her weapon(s) and/or firearm(s) to the appropriate Broward Sheriff’s Office authorities to be secured in a firearms locker, and such item(s) shall be returned to the law enforcement officer upon his or her departure from the Broward County Courthouse.

(3) **Law Enforcement Officers Dressed in Plain Clothes** - **All** law enforcement officers dressed in plain clothes and who are on official business, upon entry to any Broward County Courthouse, **must** declare any weapon or firearm and his or her reason and purpose for entry. The Broward Sheriff’s Office shall maintain, near the entrance of each Broward County Courthouse, a “Plain Clothes Officer Sign-In Log.”¹ **All** law enforcement officers dressed in plain clothes **must** sign and complete all required information listed on the “Plain Clothes Officer Sign-In Log” upon entering any Broward County Courthouse, and shall indicate whether the purpose of

¹ An exemplar of the “Plain Clothes Officer Sign-In Log” is attached to this Administrative Order.

their visit is “Official Business” or “Personal Business.” If “Official Business,” the law enforcement officer is permitted to enter the Broward County Courthouse while possessing or carrying his or her weapon or firearm. If the law enforcement officer’s purpose for entering the Broward County Courthouse is “Personal Business,” the law enforcement officer shall surrender all firearms or weapons in his or her possession to the appropriate Broward Sheriff’s Office authorities, and such firearms or weapons shall be secured in a firearms locker and returned to the law enforcement officer upon his or her departure from the Broward County Courthouse. “Personal Business” includes, but is not limited to, attending or participating in a court proceeding in which the law enforcement officer has a personal interest in the outcome, such as a matter involving a family member, relative, neighbor, or friend.

(4) If a law enforcement officer is in doubt as to whether he or she may carry a firearm into any Broward County Courthouse, the officer should contact his or her supervisor, the Broward Sheriff’s Office, or the Trial Court Administrator’s Office.

(5) Nothing contained herein shall be construed as preventing any Judge, General Magistrate, or Hearing Officer from prohibiting any person from possessing a firearm while in their respective courtrooms.

C. ADMISSION SEARCHES

(1) The following shall be exempt from the screening and search requirement upon entering any Broward County Courthouse:

- a. All Federal Judges and Federal Magistrates;
- b. All Judges and Justices of the State of Florida;
- c. All Seventeenth Judicial Circuit General Magistrates and Hearing Officers;
- d. The Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Trial Court Administrator, Chief Deputy Trial Court Administrator, and General Counsel;
- e. The elected Seventeenth Judicial Circuit State Attorney, the Chief Assistant State Attorney, and the Executive Director for the State Attorney;
- f. The elected Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Public Defender, and the Executive Chief Assistants for the Public Defender; and
- g. The elected Clerk of the Courts, and the Chief Administrator of the Clerk of the Courts.

- (2) Other than those persons identified in sections B(1) and C(1), any person entering any Broward County Courthouse shall enter through authorized entrances and pass through a magnetometer.
- (3) Any person who activates the magnetometer shall be subject to a security search to identify all objects which activated the magnetometer.
- (4) Prior to passing through the magnetometer, all persons, except Courthouse employees and licensed attorneys, shall remove any and all belts, and any person carrying a package, briefcase, container, purse, pocketbook, pager, cellular telephone or any other electronic device shall place such item(s) on the X-ray conveyor belt and/or shall submit it to the security detail for visual inspection, including activation of any electronic device or devices, if applicable.
- (5) Should the X-ray machine disclose what may be a weapon or other prohibited item, the item or container shall be subject to a manual search.
- (6) If illegal firearms, weapons, hazardous materials or destructive devices, or contraband or any other prohibited item or items are discovered during a search, the appropriate Broward Sheriff's Office authorities shall be notified immediately so that a seizure and an arrest may be effectuated.
- (7) Notwithstanding any exemption from the screening and search requirements, any person may be requested to submit to a security screening and search of his or her person and/or belongings, if there is reason to believe that that person has in their possession a prohibited item or items.

D. PACKAGES AND LETTERS

- (1) All packages and letters entering any Broward County Courthouse shall either pass through a magnetometer or be inspected. In the case of boxes of materials and supplies delivered through any Broward County Courthouse loading dock, the inspection shall be completed in such a manner to ensure that the integrity of the carton has not been compromised. If a carton appears to have been opened and resealed, the carton shall be inspected to ensure that no firearms, weapons, hazardous materials or destructive devices, contraband, or any other prohibited items have been placed in the carton.
- (2) If illegal firearms, weapons, hazardous materials or destructive devices, contraband, or any other prohibited items are discovered during a search, the

appropriate Broward Sheriff's Office authorities shall be notified immediately so that a seizure and an arrest may be effectuated.

E. NOTICE

(1) The following notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place at all Broward County Courthouse entrances:

“FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC, ALL PERSONS ENTERING THESE PREMISES MUST PASS THROUGH A MAGNETOMETER (METAL DETECTOR). IF THE MAGNETOMETER REGISTERS, THAT PERSON WILL BE SUBJECT TO A LIMITED SEARCH. ALL PACKAGES, BRIEFCASES, POCKETBOOKS, PURSES OR OTHER ITEMS CARRIED BY A PERSON, INCLUDING ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES, MUST BE OFFERED FOR INSPECTION IF SUCH PERSON WISHES TO ENTER THE BUILDING. NO WEAPONS OR FIREARMS, EVEN THOSE LEGALLY-AUTHORIZED, ARE PERMITTED TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE COURTHOUSE. ILLEGAL WEAPONS OR OTHER CONTRABAND DISCOVERED IN THE COURSE OF A SEARCH WILL BE SEIZED.”

This Administrative Order vacates Administrative Order 2017-64-Gen (Amendment 1).

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, this 3rd day of October, 2025.

/s/ Carol-Lisa Phillips
Carol-Lisa Phillips, Chief Judge

EXHIBIT "A"

Handgun (any type)	Bullets
Shotgun	Stun gun (nonlethal; non-projectile firing)
Rifle (any type)	Any other item that can be utilized as a
Machine Gun	weapon
Flare Gun	
Starter Gun	
Tazer	
Butterfly knife	
Stiletto (metal or plastic polymer)	
Tear gas gun	
Switchblade knife	
Dirk/Dagger (metal or plastic polymer)	
Spike/Ninja key ring	
Ice pick	
Slungshot/Black jack	
Billie club	
Telescoping baton (ASP)	
Throwing Star (Shuriken)	
Metallic/plastic polymer knuckles	
Sword cane	
Umbrella with spike inside	
Kubaton with knife blade inside	
Scissors	
Mace/pepper spray	
Darts	
Razors	
Knives	
Screwdriver	
Hammer	
Pliers	
Wrench	
Drill bits	
Carpet cutters	
Biker's belt	
Large pin	
Baseball bat	
Golf club	
Handcuffs	