

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PASCO AND PINELLAS COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2021-013 PA/PI-CIR

**RE: AOSC20-23 COVID-19 EMERGENCY MEASURES AND
MANDATORY CIVIL CASE MANAGEMENT ORDERS**

The Florida Supreme Court has issued several administrative orders implementing temporary measures essential to safely administering justice during the COVID-19 pandemic. The high court amended its COMPREHENSIVE COVID-19 EMERGENCY MEASURES FOR FLORIDA TRIAL COURTS, AOSC20-23, by provisions in Amendment 11 which directed chief judges to issue administrative orders requiring presiding judges in specifically defined civil cases to issue case management orders that contain deadlines for completing certain pretrial matters and setting trial dates consistent with the time standards specified in the Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.250(a)(1)(B) for the completion of civil cases.

The Supreme Court AOSC20-23, in Amendment 11, section III. G. (on pages 16 through 21) sets forth specific provisions for Case Management and Resolution that include provisions applicable to the existing civil backlog of cases. These “civil cases” are defined (in footnote 13 on page 16) as actions to which the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure apply.

In order to implement these specific provisions, as directed by the Florida Supreme Court, and in accordance with Article V, section 7, Florida Constitution, Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, and section 43.26, Florida Statutes,

IT IS ORDERED:

1. Judges presiding over “civil cases”, whether in circuit court or county court civil divisions, shall review the Supreme Court case management and resolution provisions contained in AOSC20-23, *Amendment 11*, as well as Fla. R. Jud. Admin 2.250 and 2.545. Thereafter, they shall review their pending civil cases with the requirements of the Supreme Court and this local administrative order in mind. The presiding judges are required to determine the category of each pending “civil case” and are required to issue a case management order in certain civil cases.

2. In AOSC20-23, *Amendment 11*, the three categories of civil cases to be considered are: complex cases, general cases, and streamlined cases. “Complex Civil Cases” are defined as actions that have been or may be designated by court order as complex under Fla. R. Civ. Pro. 1.201. Pursuant to AOSC20-23, *Amendment 11*, the undersigned has determined that “Streamlined Civil Cases” are those civil non-jury actions that will be tried before a judge and “General Civil Cases” are those actions that will be subject to a jury trial.

3. Since complex litigation is governed by the specific case management procedures in Rule 1.201, the provisions in AOSC20-23, *Amendment 11*, do not control issuance of case management orders in those cases. Therefore, in an effort to assist the judges in the categorization and management of cases, counsel for the plaintiff in any pending complex case has been ordered by local Administrative Order No. 2021-12 PA/PI CIR to send a letter to the presiding judge

notifying the court of the present status of the cause. If there is an existing case management order in effect a copy is to be included for the judge to review.

4. Presiding judges shall issue Mandatory Covid-19 Emergency Civil Case Management Orders in “General Civil Cases” and in “Streamlined Civil Cases” in conformity with the mandates in AOSC20-23, *Amendment 11*, for cases filed before April 30, 2021. The Supreme Court requires such case management orders must be issued within 30 days of service of the complaint on the last of all named defendants or by May 28, 2021, whichever date is later.

5. Counsel for the parties and pro se individuals representing themselves have been noticed, by Administrative Order 2021-012, that such emergency mandatory case management orders will be issued by the presiding judges in an effort to comply with the Supreme Court mandate and that these orders will be sent to the parties and counsel as listed in the service addresses in the court file. All parties have been ordered to review the service addresses on file to confirm the addresses, including email addresses, are correctly listed. Counsel for the parties have been ordered to enter service email addresses within the Judicial Automated Workflow System (JAWS) or confirm that existing service email addresses are correctly listed. Pro se parties who do not have access to JAWS have been ordered to update their addresses on file with the Clerk of Court in the county in which the case is filed. These measures have been taken to insure proper service of the orders.

6. It is anticipated that the number of cases presently pending in each judge’s section that must be coordinated, scheduled, and noticed for case management conference far exceeds the amount of time presently available on the judge’s docket. Litigants and counsel have been advised of the fact that the presiding judges may be forced to issue case management orders in cases without a noticed hearing and without any input from the litigants.

7. Counsel for the parties and pro se individuals representing themselves in the affected cases have been encouraged in Administrative Order 2021-012 to consult and confer in an effort to draft a mutually acceptable Agreed Mandatory Civil Case Management Order for submission to the court that addresses all the deadlines in AOSC20-23, *Amendment 11*, and moves the case to disposition in a timely fashion. Proposed case management orders in some cases may be uploaded to the JAWS for the county where the case is located. Presiding judges may accept and sign such orders as they deem appropriate. Agreed orders thus approved will control over prior orders or mandatory orders issued without notice and hearing.

8. All judges within this circuit are directed to strictly comply with Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.545(a), (b), and (e) which respectively require judges to conclude litigation as soon as it is reasonably and justly possible to do so, to take charge of all cases at an early stage and to control the progress of the case until it is determined, and to apply a firm continuance policy allowing continuances only for good cause shown.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers in St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida, this _____ day of April 2021.

ORIGINAL SIGNED ON APRIL 1, 2021
BY ANTHONY RONDOLINO, CHIEF JUDGE

cc: All Judges
The Honorable Bruce Bartlett, State Attorney
The Honorable Sara Mollo, Public Defender
The Honorable Nikki Alvarez-Sowles, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Pinellas County
The Honorable Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Pinellas County
Gay Inskeep, Trial Courts Administrator
Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel, Second District
Ngozi Acholonu, Assistant Regional Counsel, Second District
Lillian Simon, Director of Administrative Services, Pasco County
Kimberly Thompson, Chief Operations Officer, Pasco County Clerk's Office
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