



MEMORANDUM

To: Fort Myers Division Court Staff
From: Sheri Polster Chappell, United States District Judge
Date: March 19, 2020
Re: Fort Myers Division Protocol for Proceedings During COVID-19 Directives

This Memorandum aims to provide you with updated information on the Fort Myers Division's response to the coronavirus situation, which covers until **May 31, 2020**. Our response places top priority on the health and safety of our employees, litigants, and members of the Bar as well as our commitment to the administration of justice.

1. All criminal and civil jury trials are suspended through May 31, 2020, or until further notice.
2. All large gatherings at the courthouse are postponed until May 31, 2020. This includes naturalization ceremonies, school programs, CLE programs, and the like.
3. Essential grand jury proceedings will be conducted in the jury assembly room to allow for social distancing.
4. Signs and flyers have been posted at all entrances of our courthouse that advise those who are sick, have recently traveled to certain destinations, or have been exposed to the virus that they may not enter the courthouse and providing contact information to advise that their entry has been refused.
5. The U.S. Attorney and the Federal Public Defender offices, Probation, and Pretrial Services are working under teleworking protocols. Motions to continue proceedings should be filed with the appropriate presiding judge. The judicial officers are encouraged to be as generous as is consistent with the proper administration of justice in granting requests for postponement and granting appearances by telephone where possible.
6. Each judicial officer will make his or her own determination about the cancellation of status conferences or other criminal proceedings that do not require the presence of the defendant.
7. Requests for suspension of deadlines in civil cases or for accommodations to avoid travel should be made with the appropriate presiding judge, and travel for purposes

of litigation is discouraged. Use of video and other means of conducting discovery is encouraged.

8. Chambers staff are encouraged to telework, subject to the direction of the judicial officer. Clerk's Office employees should consult Leslie Friedmann or the Clerk of Court for direction on teleworking or other workplace/scheduling issues.
9. Our building maintenance/cleaning staff continue to disinfect high-contact points like doors, elevators, counsel tables, twice daily. There are also hand sanitizer products throughout the courthouse.

Thank you for all your cooperation and patience as we work through this unusual circumstance.