



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
JACKSONVILLE DIVISION
300 North Hogan Street
Jacksonville, Florida 32202**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jacksonville Division Courthouse staff, and attorneys practicing in the Jacksonville Division
FROM: Timothy J. Corrigan, United States District Judge
DATE: April 7, 2020
RE: Update to Jacksonville Division Protocol for Proceedings During Current National Emergency related to COVID-19

In my March 20, 2020, memorandum (available on the Court's website page for the Jacksonville Division, <https://www.flmd.uscourts.gov/locations/jacksonville>), I provided you with information concerning the Jacksonville Division's response to the coronavirus situation. The March 20, 2020, memorandum remains operative, including the provision that no jury trials will commence before May 31, 2020. In response to inquiries, I now write to provide some further information on federal court practice in Jacksonville during the national emergency.

1. We encourage the lawyers to continue to work on their federal civil cases, consistent with the current public health requirements. Thus, to the extent feasible, parties should be attending scheduled mediations by video or audio, engaging in discovery, and meeting motion filing deadlines. Counsel are encouraged to be cooperative and to work in good faith with opposing counsel to try to accomplish as much as possible during this period. This will enable the cases to stay active until we can get back to more normal operations. However, if extensions or continuances are needed, counsel should confer with opposing counsel consistent with Local Rule 3.01(g), and file whatever extension motions are necessary. In filing such motions, prolonged explanations will not normally be necessary and the Judges will be understanding of the situation.

2. Depositions can be taken remotely, with the deponent and counsel appearing in different locations by video or audio. The Florida Supreme Court has specifically authorized court reporters to report depositions and swear deponents remotely. While there is no specific federal court order authorizing this practice, the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provide ample authority for the parties to consent to having a court reporter appear remotely and swear the witness remotely. See, e.g., Fed. R. Civ. P. Rules 29(a) & 30(b)(4). All parties should consent to this procedure on the record at the beginning of the deposition.

3. The Judges in the Jacksonville Division have suspended the requirement to deliver courtesy copies until further notice, unless specifically asked for by a Judge in a particular case.

4. To the extent possible, counsel in criminal cases should also attempt to move the cases forward. While we are currently trying to avoid having in-person hearings unless absolutely necessary, video proceedings are now authorized in most situations with the consent of the defendant. If a defendant wishes to go forward with a hearing, it would be helpful to file a written consent to a video proceeding to alert the Court of the situation. Criminal lawyers should work with the assigned Judge concerning the needs of their cases.

5. During the national emergency, CJA attorneys practicing in the Jacksonville Division may submit interim vouchers for payment as necessary.

This is a time for the professionalism, civility and collegiality of the bar to shine through. Disagreements over scheduling or other minor matters seem especially unimportant at the moment. We are all in this together. Let them say at the end of this that both the bench and the bar performed in the highest traditions of our profession.

Stay safe and stay well.