

Eighteenth Judicial Circuit
Seminole County – Criminal Division M
Judicial Practices and Procedures
(last modified *November 13, 2025*)

Honorable Michael J. Rudisill, Circuit Judge
Kirsten Tague, Judicial Assistant

Contact Information

Mailing Address: 101 Eslinger Way, Sanford, FL 32773

Telephone: (407) 665-4996

E-mail: kirsten.tague@flcourts18.org

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A. Communications with the Judicial Office

- **Method of Communication:** Communications to the judicial office must be submitted by e-mail to kirsten.tague@flcourts18.org. The subject line must contain the case number and case name (e.g., 2025-CF-001234 – State of Florida v. Doe).
- **Ex parte Communications:** All communications with the judicial office must comply with Canon 3 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which prohibits a judge from initiating, permitting, or considering ex parte communications and from considering other communications outside the presence of the parties concerning a pending or impending proceeding, unless authorized by law. All parties must be copied on any e-mail directed to the judicial office, unless an ex parte communication is authorized by law.
- **Unsolicited Communications:** Unsolicited communications from non-parties will not be considered by the Court. Parties may only contact the judicial office in accordance with these practices and procedures.

- **E-Filing Portal Contact Information:** All attorneys and self-represented litigants must provide an e-mail address to receive signed orders electronically, unless excused. Fla. R. Gen. Prac. & Jud. Admin. 2.516. It is the responsibility of attorneys and self-represented litigants to update their contact information using Form 2.603 any time there is a change in the e-mail account registered for electronic service.
- **Pro Se Defendants:** Pro se Defendants are responsible for abiding by all applicable laws and rules of this State including the court's procedures. The court may not engage in ex parte communications with a party. Copies of any requests, letters, and motions must be served to the State. If the request, letter, or motion requires the court to rule, the State's position must be included in the request, letter, or motion. Failure to include the State's position may result in a denial of the request, letter, or motion. The court may otherwise require a hearing.

B. Scheduling Procedures

- **Scheduling Hearings:** Hearings of 15 minutes or less must be scheduled using the court's online scheduling platform, JACS (Judicial Automatic Calendaring System). Hearings of more than 15 minutes must be requested by e-mailing the judicial assistant and copying opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant. "Meet and confer" requirements should be strictly enforced, and hearings should not be scheduled without the required certifications.
- **Notice of Hearing:** A notice of hearing must be filed and served immediately after reserving hearing time. All notices of hearing must contain the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) notification required by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.540.
- **Continuance Procedure:** If counsel is requesting a continuance and there is not an objection from the State and the defendant has already waived speedy trial, counsel may file a written Motion to Continue and submit a proposed Order through the eportal to the Court. Motions for continuance must comply with Rule 2.085(e) or be made orally on the record in open court. The motion must include the State's position. If unable to obtain the State's position, the motion must indicate such. Such motions and proposed Orders must be filed at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled court date.
- **Cancelling Hearings:** Only the party who scheduled a hearing may cancel the hearing. Hearings must be cancelled via JACS. If you are unable to cancel the hearing, please contact Kirsten Tague at kirsten.tague@flcourts18.org. You must also file and serve a notice of cancellation on opposing counsel and any self-represented litigant.

- **Matters Not Requiring a Hearing:** Some matters do not require a hearing, and a proposed Order may be submitted through the e-portal in Word format along with a separately filed cover letter indicating no objection to the proposed Order; and/or with a properly filed Stipulation. The Motion shall also indicate that all interested parties have been contacted, and their position must be indicated in the motion. A statement indicating “no position,” without further explanation is insufficient and will need to be set for a hearing.

C. Telephonic Appearance

- **Telephonic Appearance Procedure:** Requests to appear telephonically for an appearance must be made by motion at least (five) 5 business days prior to the scheduled hearing. A proposed order will also need to be submitted to the Court. The proposed Order must state the date and time of the hearing, the first and last name of the party appearing by phone, and a telephone number for the Court to call at the time of the hearing. The court does not use Teams or Zoom. If the Court grants permission to appear telephonically, the Court will call you from the bench when the case is ready to be addressed.

D. Submission of Orders

- **Format:** All proposed orders must be submitted in Word format along with a separately filed cover letter either (1) certifying that all parties agree to the order or (2) containing a statement identifying any disagreement of the parties as to the proposed order.
- **Submission Method:** Please submit all proposed orders through the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal.
- **Other Procedures Relating to Submission of Orders:** Stipulated matters do not require a hearing and may be submitted with a cover letter through the e-portal. The Motion and/or cover letter must state that opposing counsel has reviewed the proposed order or stipulation and does not object to the court entering the relief requested.

E. Hearing Procedures

- **Arraignments:** Arraignments are scheduled at the Criminal Justice Center in Courtroom 1A or the court facility in the John E. Polk Correctional Facility, which is located behind the Criminal Justice Center. All notices for Arraignment are for 1:30 p.m. The notice for Arraignment will state the time and place for the Arraignment in out-of-custody cases. Arraignments for defendants who are in custody begin at 9:00 a.m. in the courtroom at the John E. Polk Correctional Facility. Arraignments for out-of-custody cases begin at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 1A at the Criminal Justice Center. Defendants’ appearances may be waived for

arraignment pursuant to Fla. R. Crim. P. 3.180(a)(3) EXCEPT when represented by the Office of the Public Defender or other court appointed counsel AND the Clerk of Court has determined that the Defendant does not qualify for court appointed counsel. If such a determination has been made by the Clerk of Court, the Defendant shall appear for arraignment so that the court may conduct a review of the Affidavit of Indigency and the Clerk's finding of not indigent.

- **Docket Sounding:** Docket Soundings are scheduled at the Criminal Justice Center in Courtroom 5B or the court facility in the John E. Polk Correctional Facility, which is located behind the Criminal Justice Center. All notices for Docket Sounding are for 9:00 a.m. The notice for Docket Sounding will state the time and place for Docket Sounding in out-of-custody cases. Docket Sounding for defendants who are in custody begin at 1:00 p.m. in the courtroom at the John E. Polk Correctional Facility. In-custody may be addressed on the morning docket, but counsel must notify the judicial assistant at least 48 hours in advance to allow the jail to be properly notified. Private counsel cases are called first. A sign-up sheet is used to determine the order in which private counsel cases are called. Defendants are required to attend docket sounding unless excused by written waiver. Defendants who are out of state, who reside a great distance from Seminole County, who are hospitalized, or are incapacitated, may be provisionally excused from docket sounding by defense counsel.
- **Trial Scheduling Conference:** Cases which are set for trial may be set for trial scheduling conference. Defendants and counsel must be present at the scheduling conference unless excused by the Court. Counsel is not authorized to waive the defendant's presence in writing for the scheduling conference. Counsel should be prepared to discuss the following issues at the scheduling conference: witness availability, length of trial, any pretrial motions, and any jury instructions that will be requested that are not standard jury instructions.
- **Sentencing:** All sentencing hearings on a sentencing docket are scheduled for the same time. Routine sentencing hearings should take no more than ten to fifteen minutes. Cases which are going to require the appearance of experts or numerous witnesses (except cases involving sentencing enhancements such as habitual offenders) should be scheduled for a specific sentencing date with the presiding judge in open court at the time when the sentencing date is set. Defendants who fail to appear for sentencing, who are late for sentencing, or who violate the terms and conditions of release pending sentencing may not be permitted to withdraw his or her plea and will be subject to the maximum sentence allowed by law.
- **Jury Selection:** All juries are selected on Monday morning of the trial week. All attorneys and defendants are expected to be present for trial by 9:00 a.m. Defense counsel shall make arrangements to

provide civilian clothing to defendants who are in custody prior to jury selection so that dressing for trial will not cause delay.

- **Violation of Probation/Orders to Appear:** The Court has Violation of Probation Arraignment Dockets and Violation of Probation Trial Dockets. All parties must appear. Waivers of Arraignment for Violation of Probation are not permitted. Cases are expected to be resolved by plea or continued pending resolution from the Violation of Probation Arraignment Docket. When set on the Violation of Probation Trial Docket, cases are expected to be resolved by trial or plea.
- **Competency:** Attorneys shall comply with all applicable laws and rules of this state concerning competency matters. Proposed Orders on Motions to Determine Competency shall be submitted to the court via the eportal within five (5) calendar days of filing the motion. All parties must be present for all competency hearings and competency status hearings unless excused by the court. Waivers of the Defendant's appearance is not permitted. Persons housed in the state hospital need not be present for competency status hearings.

F. Other Division Procedures

- **Courtroom:** Judge Rudisill holds most hearings in Courtroom 5B at the Criminal Justice Center, 101 Eslinger Way, Sanford, Florida 32773.
- **ADA Accommodations:** If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in a proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator, Court Administration, 301 North Park Avenue, Sanford, FL 32771, telephone number (407) 665-4227 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.
- **Interpreter Requests:** If an interpreter is needed for a hearing or trial, please contact Court Administration at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled hearing. [SEMINOLE INTERPRETER REQUEST \(SOLICITUD DE INTÉRPRETE PARA SEMINOLE\)](#)
- **Plea Negotiations and Plea Offers:** All plea agreements are provisionally accepted when made subject to review of presentence investigations, evaluations, score sheets, and other relevant matters. If the court cannot accept a plea as tendered, it may be withdrawn upon motion of counsel and the case will be set for trial. All plea offers must be delivered to defense counsel and

communicated to the defendant prior to the trial scheduling conference. The approved plea forms are included on the 18th Judicial Circuit website.

- **Motions:** Motions shall be filed and served in compliance with all applicable rules and laws of this State. The Motion must contain the opposing party's position unless it is an adversarial motion that requires a hearing (i.e. bond, suppression, dismissal).
- **Motions in Limine and Pretrial Motions:** All Motions in Limine and Pre Trial Motions must be scheduled for hearing and heard prior to the trial date.
- **Motions for Early Termination of Probation/Community Control:** Motions for Early Termination of Probation or Community Control must be filed with the Clerk of Court with copies to the State. The Motion must include verification from the probation or community control officer that all terms and conditions of supervision have been satisfied, including costs, fines, fees and restitution. The Motion must also include the State's position. The Court will not consider a Motion for Early Termination of Supervision if all terms, conditions, costs, fines, fees, and restitution have not been satisfied.
- **Post-Conviction Motions:** All applicable rules and laws of this State must be followed when filing post-conviction motions. This includes service of said motions to the court. The mere filing of a post-conviction motion via the eportal does not satisfy the service of that motion upon the court.