



**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #2020-00-09**

**RE: COVID-19 EMERGENCY TEMPORARY STANDING ORDER REGARDING  
PARENTING IN DOMESTIC RELATIONS CASES**

**WHEREAS**, the Florida State Courts System continues to monitor and proactively address the effects on court operations of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), a severe acute respiratory transmission; and

**WHEREAS**, the World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 a pandemic, the Surgeon General and State Health Officer has declared a public health emergency exists, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Florida Department of Health, and the Florida Department of Management Services have published after-travel health precaution information; and

**WHEREAS**, since March 17, 2020, the Florida Supreme Court has issued various Emergency Administrative Orders, which may be found at [www.floridasupremecourt.org/Emergency](http://www.floridasupremecourt.org/Emergency), which include ordering the cancellation or postponement of all non-essential in-person hearings; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor of Florida has declared a state of emergency exists, announced that all schools will be closed to students until at least April 15, 2020, and announced that distance learning was to begin on Monday, March 30, 2020, for all students; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor of Florida on April 1, 2020, issued Executive Order 20-91 providing that Floridians are "safer at home" to slow the spread of COVID-19 and outlining essential activities that may continue, which include, among other things caring for loved ones; and

**WHEREAS**, to reduce the number of "emergency" filings and hearings until nonessential in-person hearings resume; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in the best interests of the parties and child(ren) that parents may continue to perform their duties and responsibilities of co-parenting, share the additional responsibilities of parenting through this time, maintain continuity for children, and that the parties comply with all orders and Court rules;

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that:

## **I. APPLICATION AND TERM OF THIS ORDER.**

A. This Order is intended for all family law matters regarding parental responsibility and time-sharing, to be utilized and complied with immediately in all existing and newly filed Domestic Relations cases in all counties of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. However, this Order shall not supersede or modify any existing domestic violence injunction or criminal "no contact" order which is in conflict with these provisions.

B. This Order does not preclude a Judge from modifying or amending this Order in individual cases where the Judge deems necessary. Any part of this Order not changed by a subsequent order shall remain in effect.

## **II. CONTACT WITH BOTH PARENTS; SHARED PARENTING.**

A. All parties are expected to follow all current Final Judgments, Temporary Orders, Settlement Agreements, or other orders of the court awarding parental responsibility or time-sharing (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Orders of the Court"). That means that if Orders of the Court define timesharing pursuant to a school calendar, the parties must follow the calendar as published and not any adjustments to the calendar because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

B. In most circumstances, following the Orders of the Court is consistent with Executive Order 20-91. However, if a party believes that compliance with the Orders of the Court, violates Executive Order 20-91, the parties are instructed to follow the emergency procedures detailed in Section III, below.

C. Unless otherwise prohibited by the Orders of the Court, each parent is prohibited from unreasonably restricting access of the child(ren) to the other parent.

D. Exchanges that were to take place at a child(ren)'s school or daycare that is not currently open should be arranged between the parents in writing by email, text, or parenting app. In the event the parents cannot agree on an alternate arrangement, the exchanges shall take place at the police station or sheriff's office that is located closest to the school or daycare. The closest police station or sheriff's office shall be determined by the distance shown on Google Maps, Apple Maps, or some other similar mapping program or website.

E. Video-conferencing and phone contact shall be honored as set forth in the parties' Parenting Plan. Unless previously ordered, video and phone contact should not be monitored or interrupted by the co-parent or any other third party, unless there are specific Orders of the Court in place as to those issues.

## **II. CONTEMPT AND WRITS OF BODILY ATTACHMENT.**

Law enforcement agencies, criminal justice authorities and the courts instituted substantial measures to reduce the number of people incarcerated. During this health crisis, judges are directed not to issue writs of bodily attachment for contempt hearings related to nonpayment of child support or alimony. Nothing in this Order prohibits a judge from ordering other measures to obtain compliance with a court order.

### III. EMERGENCY MOTIONS AND EXPEDITED HEARINGS.

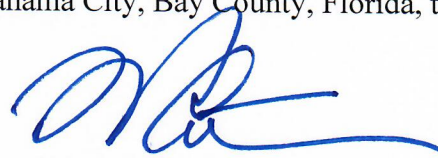
A. Parents are strongly cautioned that unreasonable, hurtful, or destructive behavior may be severely and harshly sanctioned by the court, and the non-offending parent may be awarded significant make up time, including summer and consecutive major holidays. The Court may award attorney's fees and costs and/or sanctions for a party's unreasonable behavior. Such actions may also impact the Court's long-term decision for timesharing pursuant to the Chapter 61 factors to determine a Parenting Plan in the best interest of the child(ren).

B. Any party may file a motion to address adherence to the Orders of the Court. The judges of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit are committed to promptly addressing emergency matters pertaining to timesharing related to this public health crisis.

C. Motions filed as "emergency" motions must be served on the other parent pursuant to the rules of procedure. The Court may require a written response from the other party. The Court may also rule upon the papers without a hearing. The moving party should submit a proposed order in Word format for the Court's consideration.

D. If upon review of the written filings, the Court determines that a hearing is necessary, the Court may set a hearing at which the parties, and/or counsel, will be required to appear remotely. The Court expects all parties and attorneys to cooperate in the scheduling of telephonic or electronic hearings.

**DONE AND ORDERED** in Chambers at Panama City, Bay County, Florida, this 7<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020.



**HON. CHRISTOPHER N. PATTERSON**  
**CHIEF JUDGE**