



## Supreme Court of Florida

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Craig Waters

Florida Supreme Court

(850) 414-7641

[publicinformation@flcourts.org](mailto:publicinformation@flcourts.org)

### Florida's Chief Justice releases "Best Practices" guidelines for court pandemic operations

TALLAHASSEE – Florida's Chief Justice Charles Canady distributed "[Best Practices](#)" [guidelines](#) on May 11, 2020, that were developed by a statewide [COVID-19 Workgroup](#) to help people navigate new remote procedures used by state courts in the coronavirus pandemic.

The guidelines offer help not just to judges and court staff but also to people representing themselves in court during the public health crisis. They also will be useful to attorneys, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders in the justice system.

Guidelines are being distributed to chief judges around the state and to the public through court websites and on social media. They cover the following topics:

- **Helping Pro Se Litigants with Remote Appearance Technology**, which helps judges and court staff use remote technology when self-represented litigants are involved;
- **Representing Yourself and Using Remote Appearance Technology with the Courts**, which helps self-represented litigants understand how remote hearings will work;
- **Management of Evidence in Remote Hearings in Civil and Family Cases**, which helps judges, court staff, and attorneys manage evidence and witnesses in remote civil and family cases; and
- **Out-of-County Inmates**, which helps judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and law enforcement agencies honor due-process requirements for out-of-county arrestees during the pandemic, including sample forms.

Essential court business has continued throughout the coronavirus pandemic. The current list of court events now being conducted remotely can be found in a [May 4 administrative order](#) issued by Chief Justice Charles Canady, subject to future updates.

The 17-member COVID-19 Workgroup was created by Canady in an [April 21 order](#). It is charged with making ongoing recommendations to guide a phased return to full court operations. Its members include judges, courts personnel, and other stakeholders in the justice system.

Chaired by Orlando-area Circuit [Judge Lisa Taylor Munyon](#), the Workgroup's mission includes examining the current status of all court proceedings statewide that have been affected by the pandemic. Where warranted, the Workgroup will propose methods for resolving cases with remote technology and other new procedures. Information about the Workgroup and its meeting minutes are available on its [webpage](#).

The move toward more “virtual” hearings is a major historical shift in state court operations, which have relied heavily on in-person proceedings in the 175 years since Florida became a state in 1845. Canady also has asked the Workgroup to make suggestions for remote procedures and other changes that can continue even after the pandemic is over where beneficial to litigants and other justice stakeholders.

All state-court coronavirus emergency orders and advisories are linked on the Florida Supreme Court's website: <https://www.floridasupremecourt.org/Emergency>

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