

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 1-20.11**

**SECURITY WITHIN THE HIGHLANDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

**WHEREAS**, Rule 2.215, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, and §43.26, Florida Statutes, empowers the Chief Judge of each circuit with the administration supervision of the courts within the judicial circuits; and

**WHEREAS**, the court recognizes that threats and acts of violence directed at private citizens, witnesses, jurors, litigants, attorneys, court personnel, and judges in court facilities within the State of Florida and throughout the United States are ever present, the court concludes that there remains a continuing need to provide for security within the Highlands County Courthouse (hereinafter "Courthouse") located in Sebring, Highlands County, Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Rule 2.215, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, and §43.26, Florida Statutes, and the inherent power of the court to do all things reasonable and necessary for the administration of justice, the court, having considered the unique design and configuration of the Courthouse and occupants thereof, finds that it is necessary and reasonable to have this policy for the prompt and efficient administration of justice in the courts;

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED AND DIRECTED THAT:**

1. The Sheriff of Highlands County (hereinafter "Sheriff") is authorized to provide security for the Courthouse in accordance with this Administrative Order.
2. As the official charged by law with the responsibility to maintain security within the Courthouse and surrounding areas, the Sheriff is authorized to staff security and develop policies for the operations thereof.
3. The entire Courthouse is designated as a SECURE AREA.
4. Except as otherwise provided for in this administrative order, the introduction of a common pocketknife or any item defined in §§ 790.001(1)-(6), (9)-(15), and (19), Florida Statutes (2016), into the Courthouse is prohibited.
5. For self-defense purposes, employees with assigned workstations in the Courthouse may possess "self-defense chemical spray" in the Courthouse. The "self-defense chemical spray" must comply with the size and weight restrictions of §790.001(3)(b), Florida Statutes (2016).
6. No person shall possess a firearm, ammunition, or electronic weapon or device in the Courthouse except:

- a) Bailiffs;
- b) Deputy Sheriffs;
- c) Certified correctional officers employed by the Sheriff and temporarily assigned to assist in maintaining courthouse security;
- d) Judges;
- e) The Highland's County Clerk of Court's (hereinafter "Clerk") armed contract security vendor for the sole purpose of securely picking up the Clerk's deposits from the Clerk's civil division on the first floor of the Courthouse. The contract security vendor must go directly to the Clerk's civil division, pick up the Clerk's deposits, and then directly exit the Courthouse with the Clerk's deposits. The contract security vendor may not possess a firearm, ammunition, or electronic weapon or device above the first floor of the Courthouse;
- f) Law enforcement officers responding to calls for emergency assistance in the Courthouse; and
- g) Law enforcement officers at the Courthouse for non-emergency official business, provided:
  - I) The law enforcement officer is at the Courthouse for official business rather than personal business.
  - II) Upon entry into the Courthouse, the law enforcement officer will show his/her agency identification to Courthouse security and fill out a daily log kept by Courthouse security stating the date, their name, their agency, their agency identification number, and their purpose for entering the Courthouse.
  - III) The law enforcement officer shall be in their duty uniform, or if the law enforcement officer is in plain clothes, then their badge must be clearly visible at all times while the law enforcement officer remains inside the Courthouse.
  - IV) All firearms shall be carried in a security holster with an internal locking mechanism, or its plain clothes equivalent that has been approved by the law enforcement officer's law enforcement agency. However, all holsters must be preapproved by Courthouse security prior to being carried in the Courthouse. Sheriff's Office members operating the security stations shall deny possession of a firearm in the Courthouse to any law enforcement officer with a non-compliant security holster.
  - V) If an emergency occurs, the law enforcement officer will be under the

command of the ranking senior bailiff in charge of the Courthouse security at that time, until the senior bailiff is relieved by incident command.

7. The court recognizes that §790.001(8), Florida Statutes (2016), provides a broad definition for “law enforcement officer”; however, for purposes of this administrative order, “law enforcement officer” is defined as officers or employees of the United States or the State of Florida, or any agency, commission, department, board, division, municipality, or subdivision thereof, who have authority to make arrests. The court also excludes the State Attorney and his or her investigators from the court’s definition of “law enforcement officers”. Therefore, the State Attorney and his or her investigators are not authorized to possess a firearm, ammunition, or electronic weapon or device in the Courthouse.
8. **COURTHOUSE ENTRANCES AND EXITS:** The main doors facing South Commerce Avenue are designated as a “Primary Entrance” and exit point to the Courthouse and are established for use by the general public. The door facing Eucalyptus Street is designated as a “Secondary Entrance” and exit point to the Courthouse, and is established for use by persons who have a disability that impairs their ability to walk or otherwise navigate through public spaces. The entry door to the Courthouse from the judicial gated-parking area shall be designated as the “Secure Entrance”.
  - a) The Primary Entrance must be utilized by all persons desiring to enter the Courthouse, unless such persons are permitted by this Administrative Order to utilize the other points of entry and exit.
  - b) The Secondary Entrance may be utilized by persons with a disability that impairs their ability to walk or otherwise navigate through public spaces, delivery staff, and Courthouse maintenance personnel. The Secondary Entrance may also be utilized by individuals with assigned workstations within the Courthouse, the Clerk of Court and the Clerk’s staff, judges and judges’ staff, the Court Administrator for the Tenth Judicial Circuit and his/her court administration employees, the State Attorney for the Tenth Judicial Circuit and his/her Assistant State Attorneys, the Public Defender for the Tenth Judicial Circuit and his/her Assistant Public Defenders, and Regional Counsel and his/her Assistant Regional Counsels, provided that these individuals shall have on their person photo employee identification badges that must be presented to security upon request.
  - c) The Secure Entrance shall be utilized only by judges, court-appointed magistrates, hearing officers, the Clerk of Courts, the Court Administrator, the Deputy Court Administrator, Courthouse maintenance personnel, the Sheriff, deputy sheriffs, and certified correctional officers employed by the Sheriff and assigned to assist in maintaining security in the courthouse. Such individuals are not subject to the “screening protocols” set forth below. Parking in the judicial gated-parking area shall be limited to judges, the Clerk of Courts, court appointed magistrates, hearing officers, the Court Administrator, and the Deputy Court Administrator. Electronic employee identification badges shall be required to access the Secure

Entrance.

**9. SCREENING PROTOCOLS AND EXEMPTIONS:**

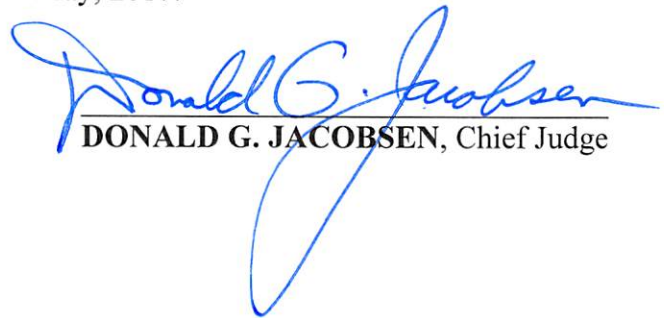
- a) All persons entering the Courthouse through the Primary Entrance or Secondary Entrance shall be subject to a screening and/or a search of their person and property, including but not limited to the use of electronic or other specialized equipment, by a security representative authorized by the Sheriff ("screening and search protocol"). Screening protocols shall be conducted at the security stations. Additional screening and/or searches may be employed upon all persons seeking entrance into a courtroom where a hearing or trial in a high-profile case is being held.
- l) Public safety personnel, which includes firefighters, EMT's, paramedics, and hazmat personnel, may be temporarily exempted from the screening protocols by Sheriff's Office members operating the security stations in order for public safety personnel to answer an emergency in the Courthouse.
- b) Prior to entry into any Courthouse location, all mail, office supplies, UPS deliveries, FedEx deliveries, DHL deliveries, and any other containers or packages, shall be subject to the screening and search protocols by an authorized security representative of the Sheriff.
- c) Anyone who refuses to submit to a screening protocol shall be denied access to the Courthouse unless otherwise exempted by this Administrative Order.
- d) The following notice shall be posted at the Primary Entrance and the Secondary Entrance to the Courthouse and at each security station:

FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC, THIS BUILDING HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS A SECURE AREA. NO WEAPONS OR FIREARMS ARE PERMITTED IN THIS BUILDING. ALL PERSONS ENTERING HERE ARE SUBJECT TO SEARCH AND MUST PASS THROUGH A MAGNETOMETER (METAL DETECTOR). IF THE DETECTOR REGISTERS, THAT PERSON WILL BE SUBJECT TO A LIMITED SEARCH. ALL PACKAGES, BRIEFCASES, POCKETBOOKS OR OTHER ITEMS CARRIED OR TRANSPORTED BY A PERSON OR A SERVICE ANIMAL MUST BE OFFERED FOR INSPECTION IF SUCH PERSON WISHES TO ENTER. UNLESS PERMITTED BY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER, ALL WEAPONS, INCLUDING POCKETKNIVES AND LEGALLY-AUTHORIZED FIREARMS, MUST BE SURRENDERED PRIOR TO GAINING ENTRY. WEAPONS OR OTHER CONTRABAND DISCOVERED IN THE

COURSE OF THESE SEARCH PROCEDURES WILL BE  
SEIZED AND PROSECUTION MAY RESULT.

- e) The screening protocol procedures are outlined in Exhibit "A" (attached hereto and incorporated herein) and may be amended from time to time by special order.
10. Any modifications to this Administrative Order shall occur only after recommendation of the Highlands County Security Committee and approval by the Chief Judge. The Highlands County Security Committee shall consist of the Highlands County Administrative Judge (chair), a county or circuit judge assigned to Highlands County and appointed to the committee by the Chief Judge, the Highlands County Clerk of Courts, the Highlands County Sheriff, and the County Administrator for Highlands County. Any member may appoint a designee at that member's discretion. No less than three members shall constitute a quorum.
11. This Administrative Order shall become effective upon entry, and cancels and supersedes all previous orders concerning the security of the Highlands County Courthouse, including Administrative Order No. 1-20.10, entered October 30, 2007.

**DONE** and **ORDERED** on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.

  
**DONALD G. JACOBSEN**, Chief Judge

Copies:  
All Judges  
Highlands County Clerk of Court  
Trial Court Administrator  
Office of the State Attorney  
Office of the Public Defender  
Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Region  
Highlands County Law Enforcement Agencies  
Electronic Bar Mailing

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **SCREENING AND SEARCH PROTOCOL FOR THE HIGHLANDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

1. All persons seeking entrance to the Courthouse, except those persons authorized to enter through the Secure Entrance, shall enter through a security station and shall pass through a magnetometer (metal detector), if one is present, or may be subject to search by a hand-held device that detects metal objects.
2. All hand-held items and items carried on service animals shall be placed on the X-ray conveyor belt for examination. All persons shall also be required to empty their pockets and place items removed on the X-ray conveyor belt. If, in the discretion of security personnel, the presence of a weapon is detected then the item shall be searched; however, no written materials shall be examined.
3. If any weapons, explosives, hazardous materials, contraband, or any item defined in §790.001(1)-(6), (9)-(15), and (19), Florida Statutes (2016), are detected, the senior bailiff on duty shall be immediately notified for appropriate action.
4. Any law enforcement officer carrying a legally authorized firearm that is not in compliance with the provisions of the Administrative Order to which this Exhibit is incorporated shall surrender the firearm for safekeeping.