

**THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**CASE NO. 25-1
(Court Administration)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 25-12
(Rescinding AO Nos. 17-01, 17-01 A1)**

**IN RE: COURTHOUSE SECURITY AND
CONTROL OF FIREARMS AND
WEAPONS**

WHEREAS, Article V, Section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution provides that the Chief Judge shall have administrative supervision over the courts within the circuit; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 43.26, Florida Statutes and Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215(b), the Chief Judge shall regulate the use of all court facilities, and is authorized to require the attendance of officers of the court and do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 30.15(4)(b), Florida Statutes, the Sheriffs and their deputies, employees and contractors are officers of the court when providing security for the trial court facilities under this subsection; and

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 3 of the Florida Constitution provides that the judiciary is a coequal branch of government and that no person belonging to one branch shall exercise any powers appertaining to another branch unless expressly provided therein. See *State v. W.D.*, 112 So. 3d 702 (Fla. 4th DCA 2013); and

WHEREAS, the presence of firearms (i.e., handguns, long guns, etc.) weapons, ammunition, explosives, or hazardous materials in a courthouse directly threatens the independence of the judicial process; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court has recognized that courts possess inherent authority to protect the integrity of judicial proceedings and the safety of the participants. See *Rose v. Palm Beach County*, 361 So. 2d 35 (Fla. 1978); *Chief Judge of the Eighth Judicial Circuit v. Bd. of Cnty. Comm'rs*, 401 So. 2d 1330 (Fla. 1980); and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized that laws

forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings do not violate the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution. See *D.C. v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570 (2008); *New York State Rifle & Pistol Ass'n, Inc. v. Bruen*, 597 U.S. 1 (2022.); and

WHEREAS, the court recognizes that court proceedings involve highly contentious matters, and the presence of firearms or weapons by members of the public is disruptive and dangerous to the jurors, litigants, staff, judges, and the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida by Rule 2.215, Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration, it is **ORDERED**:

I. DEFINITION OF COURT FACILITIES

“Court Facilities” means all buildings, annexes, and areas where court functions are performed, including but not limited to courtrooms, chambers, jury assembly and deliberation rooms, clerk’s offices, witness rooms, mediation rooms, hearing rooms, conference rooms, offices of court staff, and all ingress and egress routes such as hallways, stairwells, lobbies, elevators, and parking areas designated for court business.

Court Facilities in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Miami-Dade County, are the following:

1. Osvaldo N. Soto Miami-Dade Justice Center
2. Dade County Courthouse
3. Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse Center
4. Miami-Dade Children’s Courthouse
5. Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building
6. Coral Gables Branch Court
7. Hialeah Courthouse
8. North Dade Justice Center
9. South Dade Justice Center
10. Miami Beach Court Facility
11. Overtown Transit Village South
12. Joseph Caleb Center

II. GENERAL PROHIBITION

Except as specifically authorized below, no member of the public shall carry or possess any firearms (i.e., handguns, long guns, etc.) weapons, ammunition, explosives, or hazardous materials in any of the Court Facilities, regardless of any licensure status. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, knives of any type or size, fireworks, caustic or flammable liquids, mace, pepper spray, electronic weapon or device (i.e., stun guns,

Tasers, etc.), or any other device(s) or instrument(s) that can be perceived to be used as a physical threat to persons, or property, in the Courthouses/annexes in Miami Dade County.

III. AUTHORIZED PERSONS

The following persons are authorized and will not be unduly restricted from carrying firearms anywhere in court facilities unless specified herein:

1. Judges of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit.
2. Deputies of the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office assigned to Judicial Security or Bailiff functions.
3. On-duty law enforcement officers who are in uniform or carrying valid agency credentials, attending to official business, including testifying as a witness, in the courthouse. Firearms must remain secured in a holster at all times.
4. The State Attorney, Assistant State Attorneys, and their investigators, but only within their designated offices. They are not permitted to carry firearms into any courtroom, judicial chambers, or court administration spaces.
5. Clerks and evidence custodians when introducing weapons into evidence, provided such items are secured and in a safe condition.

Judicial assistants and court administration employees are limited to carrying non-lethal, lawful personal protection devices, such as electronic weapons or devices, or pepper spray.

IV. SCREENING AND ENFORCEMENT

All persons, unless an authorized person, entering court facilities are subject to security screening. Refusal to submit to screening shall result in denial of entry. Conspicuous signs shall be posted at all entrances advising the public that firearms and weapons are prohibited. Judicial Security and law enforcement officers are authorized to seize prohibited items, order an individual in violation of this order to leave the Court Facility, and, when appropriate, arrest violators.

V. EMERGENCY AUTHORITY

In exigent or emergency circumstances, the Sheriff, in consultation with the Chief Judge, may temporarily adjust security protocols or authorize additional law enforcement personnel to carry firearms in court facilities.

VI. JUDICIAL DISCRETION

Nothing in this Order restricts the authority of an individual judge to further regulate possession of firearms or weapons in his or her courtroom, however, an

individual judge will not unduly restrict a law enforcement officer's access to his/her firearm in any courtroom.

This Order supersedes any local ordinance or policy that would otherwise permit firearm possession in county facilities.

Administrative Order No. 17-01, as amended, is hereby rescinded in its entirety. This Order shall take effect immediately upon signing and shall remain in effect until further order of the Court.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at Miami-Dade County, Florida, this 26th day of September 2025.

**ARIANA FAJARDO ORSHAN, CHIEF JUDGE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**