

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

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 1-20.10

SECURITY WITHIN HIGHLANDS COUNTY COURTHOUSES

WHEREAS, Rule 2.050, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, and Section 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 in Sebring, Florida, and any branch courthouses located in Highlands County (“Courthouse”); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 2.050, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, and Section 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 (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 determine the hours of operation of the security stations, staff security, and develop policies for the operations thereof.
3. The entire Courthouse is designated as a SECURE AREA.
4. The introduction of any item defined in section 790.001, Florida Statutes, into any Courthouse is prohibited, with the exception of legal chemical spray used for self defense by individuals identified in paragraph 5 (b) of this Administrative Order.
5. No person shall possess a firearm in the Courthouse except:
 - (a) Bailiffs;
 - (b) Deputy Sheriffs and certified correctional officers temporarily assigned to assist in maintaining security;

- (c) Law enforcement officers wearing their duty uniforms with all issued duty gear, on duty and conducting official business;
- (d) Judges; and
- (e) Clerk of Court's armed contract security vendor for the purposes of securing the Clerk's deposits.

COURTHOUSE ENTRANCE - EXITS

6. The main doors facing South Commerce Avenue are designated as a "Primary Entrance" and exit point to the Courthouse and established for use by the general public. The handicapped door facing Eucalyptus Street is designated as a "Secondary Entrance" and exit point to the Courthouse and established for use by persons who have a disability that impairs their ability to walk or otherwise navigate through public spaces.

(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 Secondary Entrance or further exempted by this Administrative Order to utilize other points of entry and exit.

(b) The Secondary Entrance may be utilized by individuals with assigned workstations within the Courthouse, Courthouse maintenance personnel, the Clerk of Court and the Clerk's staff, judges and judges' staff, magistrates and magistrates' staff, attorneys and supply delivery persons. Individuals identified under 5(b) may also utilize the Primary Entrance.

SCREENING PROTOCOLS AND EXEMPTIONS

7. All persons entering the Courthouse through the Primary or Secondary Entrances shall be subject to a screening or a search or both ("screening protocol") of person and property, including but not limited to the use of electronic or other specialized equipment. Screening protocols shall be conducted at the security stations operated by authorized Sheriff's Office members. Screening protocols may further be employed upon all persons by Sheriff's Office members throughout the Courthouse at the Sheriff's Office discretion.

(a) Public safety 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) The Sheriff's Office will assign an alternate entrance and exit point. The Clerk of Court, Judges, Magistrates, and Hearing Officers assigned to the Courthouse, and other persons authorized by the Highlands County Security Committee, may utilize this alternate entrance and exit point of the Courthouse without being subjected to search protocols. However, this exemption only pertains to the assigned entrance and exit point and therefore screening protocols

may be employed upon the Clerk of Court, Judges, Magistrates, Hearing Officers and any other person authorized by the Security Committee to use the alternate entrance otherwise.

8. Prior to entry into any courthouse location all mail, office supplies, UPS deliveries, Fed Ex deliveries, DHL deliveries, and any other containers or packages, shall be subject to the search protocols by an authorized security representative of the Sheriff.

9. Anyone who refuses to submit to the search protocols shall be denied access to the Courthouse, unless otherwise exempted by this Administrative Order.

10. The following notice shall be posted at the Primary and Secondary Entrances to the Courthouse and at each security station:

**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.**

11. Any modifications to this Administrative Order shall occur only after recommendation of the Security Committee and approval by the Chief Judge. The Security Committee shall consist of the Highlands County Administrative Judge, a Highlands County Judge, the Highlands County Clerk of Court, the Sheriff and the Highlands County Administrator or a designee of any member at the member's discretion. No less than three members shall constitute a quorum.

12. This 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. 1-20.9, entered October 23, 2007.

DONE on this the 30th day of October, 2007.

J. DAVID LANGFORD
Chief Judge