

# COVID-19 CRIMINAL COURT HEARING PROTOCOLS

LEON COUNTY, SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

## **LEON COUNTY CIRCUIT CRIMINAL MATTERS:**

- All criminal proceedings are currently closed to the public, litigants and attorneys except by remote access.
- All jury trials have been cancelled through April 17, 2020. If you have questions regarding your case, please contact your attorney, not the court.
- Each felony division judge has been scheduled a day during the week for video pleas, simple bond hearings and other emergency matters through April 17,2020. Times will vary depending on the judge's schedule and courtroom availability. Priority is being given to matters that may result in a defendant's release from jail. As such, the court is only conducting video pleas for cases where the defendant is in custody at the Leon County detention facility. The court is not currently able to handle matters requiring an evidentiary hearing.
- The presiding judges' judicial assistant will need to be contacted by the attorney to obtain a hearing date and time. Many Judicial assistants are working remotely so e-mail contact is the preferred method. Email addresses for judicial assistants can be found in the judicial directory on the Second Circuit website. See link below:  
<http://2ndcircuit.leoncountyfl.gov/judges/directory.php>

- Once a hearing is set, appearance will only be by remote access. You will need to obtain conference call information from the judicial assistant of the presiding judge.
- All pleadings requiring court action must be sent by email to the judicial assistant of the presiding judge in addition to the normal filing with the clerk of court. Uncontested matters will be promptly dealt with if this process is followed. Hard copies of pleadings mailed or delivered to the judge's chambers are not likely to be quickly processed.
- Video pleas will not be considered without a signed plea agreement. Defense counsel is responsible for obtaining a signed plea form prior to the plea. Once a date and time for the plea is worked out with the judicial assistant, the Court will arrange for the defendant to appear by video from the jail for the plea.
- Please note that protocols are subject to modifications based on changing circumstances.

**OTHER SECOND CIRCUIT CRIMINAL HEARINGS:**

- For information regarding criminal court proceedings in Gadsden, Liberty, Franklin, Jefferson, and Wakulla counties, please contact the judicial assistant for the presiding judge in the respective county.