

**IN THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER S-2024-027  
(Supersedes Administrative Order S-2024-014)**

**EAST DIVISION**

Florida law permits the establishment of geographic divisions of the court by administrative order. In light of Administrative Order S-2023-056 (*East Division Reorganization*), Administrative Order S-2024-009 (*Re-Designating East County Criminal Division "P" as East County Criminal Division "X2"*), and the need to adjust a provision dealing with the county criminal court dockets, it is necessary for the proper and efficient administration of justice to update the East Division Administrative Order.

By the power vested in the chief judge under article V, section 2(d), Florida Constitution; section 43.26, Florida Statutes; and Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2), it is ORDERED:

**1. Boundaries**

For purposes of both circuit court and county court jurisdiction, the East Division will consist of the following described area of Hillsborough County:

All of that part of Hillsborough County lying within the following boundaries: From the boundary line of Hillsborough and Pasco Counties south on U.S. 301 to the first time U.S. 301 intersects I-75; south on I-75 to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard; east along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to Dover Road; south on Dover Road to Bloomingdale Avenue; west on Bloomingdale Avenue to Lithia Pinecrest Road; south on Lithia Pinecrest Road to Fish Hawk Boulevard; west on Fish Hawk Boulevard to Bell Shoals Road; south on Bell Shoals Road to Boyette Road; south on Boyette Road to Balm Boyette Road;

south on Balm Boyette Road to County Road 579; south on County Road 579 to the boundary line of Hillsborough and Manatee Counties; east along the boundary line of Hillsborough and Manatee Counties to the boundary line of Hillsborough and Polk Counties; north along the boundary line of Hillsborough and Polk Counties to the boundary line of Hillsborough and Pasco Counties; west along the boundary line of Hillsborough and Pasco Counties to U.S. 301.

## **2. Divisions**

The East Divisions will be located in the Plant City Courthouse.

### **A. Circuit Court**

Circuit court matters in the East Division will be administered by nine subdivisions designated as East Circuit Divisions “O,” “P,” “Q,” “R,” “S,” “T,” “U,” “V” and “W.”

#### **i. Civil and Family Law**

East Circuit Division “P,” East Circuit Division “R,” and East Circuit Division “T” will consist of civil actions and family law proceedings (excluding petitions for injunctions for protection against domestic violence, repeat violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking). The Clerk of the Court (clerk) will assign cases to these divisions on a random equitable basis.

#### **ii. Protective Injunctions**

East Circuit Division “Q,” East Circuit Division “S,” and East Circuit Division “V” will consist of petitions for injunctions for protection against domestic violence, repeat violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking. The clerk will assign cases to these divisions on a random equitable basis.

#### **iii. Probate and Trust**

East Circuit Division “O,” East Circuit Division “U,” and East Circuit Division “W” will consist of probate and trust cases. The clerk will assign cases to these divisions on a random equitable



basis.

B. County Court

County court matters will be administered by four subdivisions designated as East County Divisions “W,” “X,” “X2,” and “Y.”

i. Criminal

East County Division “X” and East County Division “X2” will consist of misdemeanor offenses, criminal traffic offenses, and City of Plant City criminal municipal ordinance violations. The clerk will assign these cases to Divisions “X” and “X2” based on the first letter of the defendant’s last name. If the first letter of the defendant’s last name is “A” through “L,” the case will be assigned to East County Division “X2.” If the first letter of the defendant’s last name is “M” through “Z,” the case will be assigned to East County Division “X.”

ii. Civil

East County Division “Y” will consist of civil actions, non-criminal non-traffic infractions, and City of Plant City civil municipal ordinance violations. The clerk will assign these civil actions to East County Division “Y.”

iii. Civil Traffic

East County Division “W” will consist of civil traffic infractions. The clerk will assign civil traffic infractions to East County Division “W.”

**3. Circuit Court Cases**

There will be filed in the East Division of the Circuit Court all cases and proceedings when any of the following conditions exist:

A. Civil Actions – The East Division is the location where: (i) a defendant / respondent resides; (ii) the cause of action accrued; or (iii) property in litigation is located.

B. Family Law Proceedings and Protective Injunction Petitions – The East Division is the location where a party resides.

C. Probate and Trust Administration Proceedings – The East Division is the location where (i) the decedent was domiciled; or (ii) the trustee’s usual place of business is located or, if the trustee has no place of business, the trustee’s residence is located.

**4. County Court Cases**

There will be filed in the East Division of the County Court all cases and proceedings when any of the following conditions exist:

A. Civil Actions – The East Division is the location where (i) a defendant / respondent resides; (ii) the cause of action accrued; or (iii) property in litigation is located.

B. Civil Traffic Infractions and Non-Criminal Non-Traffic Infractions – The East Division is the location where the infraction occurred.

C. Criminal and Criminal Traffic Proceedings – The East Division is the location where the offense occurred.

**5. Transfer of Case between East Division and Tampa Division**

A judge of an East Division in whose division a case has been assigned may transfer the case, after hearing and upon a showing of good cause, to an appropriate Tampa division under the respective Tampa division’s case assignment system. A judge of a Tampa Division in whose division a case has been assigned may transfer the case, after hearing and upon a showing of good cause, to the appropriate division of the East Division under the appropriate East Division’s case assignment system. The court’s decision to transfer a case will be based primarily upon the convenience of the parties, attorneys and witnesses involved.

**6. Reassignment of Case upon Judge’s Disqualification**

A. Circuit Civil Cases

If the judge presiding in East Circuit Divisions “P,” “R,” or “T” enters an order of disqualification in a circuit civil case, the clerk will reassign the case randomly and equitably to one of the other two divisions. If all three judges in East Circuit Division “P,” “R,”



and “T” enter orders of disqualification, the clerk will reassign the case to a Tampa Circuit Civil Division on a random equitable basis.

B. Family Law Cases

If the judge presiding in East Circuit Divisions “P,” “R,” or “T” enters an order of disqualification in a family law case, the clerk will reassign the case randomly and equitably to one of the other two divisions. If all three judges in East Circuit Division “P,” “R,” and “T” enter orders of disqualification, the clerk will reassign the case to a Tampa Family Law Division on a random equitable basis.

C. Protective Injunction Cases

If the judge presiding in East Circuit Divisions “Q,” “S,” or “V” enters an order of disqualification in a protective injunction case, the clerk will reassign the case randomly and equitably to one of the other two divisions. If all three judges assigned to East Circuit Division “Q,” “S,” and “V” enter orders of disqualification, the clerk will reassign the case to a Tampa Protective Injunction Division on a random equitable basis.

D. Probate and Trust Administration Cases

If the judge presiding in East Circuit Divisions “O,” “U,” or “W” enters an order of disqualification in a probate or trust administration case, the clerk will reassign the case randomly and equitably to one of the other two divisions. If all three judges assigned to East Circuit Division “O,” “U,” and “W” enter orders of disqualification, the clerk will reassign the case to Tampa Probate, Guardianship, Mental Health and Trust Division “A.”

E. Misdemeanor and Criminal Traffic Cases

If the judge presiding in East County Criminal Division “X” or “X2” enters an order of disqualification in a misdemeanor case that is not a domestic violence case or enters an order of disqualification in a criminal traffic case, the clerk will reassign the case to a Tampa County Criminal Division based on the alphabetical assignment system established for the Tampa County Criminal Divisions. If the judge presiding in East County Criminal Division “X” or “X2” enters an order of disqualification in a criminal domestic violence case, the clerk will reassign the case to Tampa County Criminal Division “F.”

F. Civil Traffic Cases

If the judge presiding in East County Division “W” enters an order of disqualification in a civil traffic case, the clerk will reassign the case to a Tampa County Civil Traffic Division “M.”

G. Non-Criminal Non-Traffic Infraction Cases

If the judge presiding in East County Division “Y” enters an order of disqualification in a non-criminal non-traffic infraction case, the clerk will reassign the case to Tampa County Civil Division “T.”

H. Other County Civil Cases

If the judge presiding in East County Civil Divisions “Y” enters an order of disqualification in any other county civil case, the clerk will reassign the case to a Tampa County Civil Division on a random equitable basis.

**7. Uniform Judicial Power**

All circuit judges and acting circuit judges assigned to the East Division will continue to be empowered to issue emergency orders and writs throughout the entire circuit even though the case in which such order or writ is issued is assigned to a Tampa Division. In the same manner, all circuit judges and acting circuit judges assigned to a Tampa Division will have full power to issue emergency orders and writs in cases assigned to the East Division.

All county judges and acting county judges assigned to the East Division will continue to be empowered to issue emergency orders throughout the entire county even though the case in which such order is issued is assigned to a Tampa Division. In the same manner, all county judges and acting county judges assigned to a Tampa Division will have full power to issue emergency orders in cases assigned to the East Division.

**8. Judicial Coverage**

Under Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, it is necessary for the proper administration of justice that the county court judge may be called upon to hear matters in the place of the East Division’s circuit judges and that



circuit court judges may be called upon to hear matters in place of the East Division's county judge.

When the judge of any division in the East Division is for any reason absent from the Plant City Courthouse, an emergency application in any case assigned to that judge's division may be presented to and heard by any other judge in the East Division. Also, when necessary for the proper administration of justice in the East Division, circuit court matters may be heard and ruled upon by a county court judge and county court matters may be heard and ruled upon by a circuit court judge. The county court judge assigned to the East Division is hereby appointed as an acting circuit court judge and the circuit court judges assigned to the East Division are hereby appointed as acting county court judges for the purposes of this administrative order.

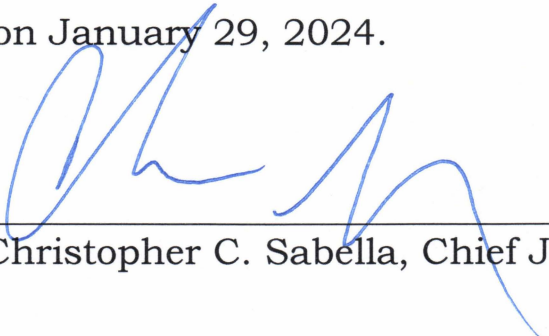
**9. Previous Administrative Order Superseded**

This administrative order supersedes Administrative Order S-2024-014 (*East Division*).

**10. Effective Date**

This administrative order is effective March 1, 2024.

ENTERED on January 29, 2024.



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Christopher C. Sabella, Chief Judge

Original to: Cindy Stuart, Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Copy to: All East Division Judges  
Susan "Suzy" Lopez, State Attorney  
Julianne Holt, Public Defender  
Chad Chronister, Sheriff  
James M. Bradford, Chief of Police, Plant City