

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

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER S-2025-028
(Supersedes Administrative Order S-2016-024)**

JURY MANAGEMENT

In light of recent statutory amendments to Florida Statutes section 40.013, it is necessary to update procedures for jury management in this circuit. By the power vested in the chief judge under article V, section 2(d), Florida Constitution; Florida Statutes section 43.26; and Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2), it is therefore **ORDERED**:

1. Jury Clerk & Jury Services

The clerk of the court will assign deputy clerks to be designated as jury clerks. Jury clerks will comprise the department known as Jury Services, located in or near the jury auditorium. Jury clerks will be responsible for: summoning jurors; processing jurors' requests to be excused; checking in jurors on the automated jury system; assisting in the qualifications of jurors; preparing the jury list after excuses have been determined; making juror assignments to courtrooms; updating payroll; preparing letters of attendance for employers upon jurors' requests; and preparing paperwork for juror compensation.

2. Juror Summonses and Questionnaires

Jury Services will be responsible for summoning jurors approximately six weeks in advance of the actual reporting date. Juror questionnaires will be mailed to prospective jurors with the summons. Supplemental juror questionnaires may be utilized in appropriate cases.

3. Disqualified and Excused Jurors

The jury clerk will send to each person summoned for jury service a form that solicits information to determine whether the person is disqualified or excused from jury service under Florida Statutes section 40.013. To be disqualified or excused from jury service, a prospective juror must complete the applicable form and return it to Jury Services along with any supporting documentation.

The jury clerk will excuse a prospective juror prior to the juror reporting for duty for any of the reasons set forth in the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 40.013(1), 40.013(2), 40.013(3), 40.013(4), 40.013(7), 40.013(8), 40.013(9), 40.013(10), 40.013(11), and 40.013(12). If any prospective juror requests to be excused from jury service for a reason set forth in Florida Statutes section 40.013(5) or 40.013(6) prior to the juror reporting for duty, the jury clerk will direct such request to the chief judge's office.

Any request to be excused from jury service made to any judge will be directed to the chief judge's office. Any judge may excuse a prospective juror by communicating that request to the chief judge. The chief judge will honor another judge's decision to excuse and will notify the jury clerk of such in writing.

4. Qualification of Venire

To assure prospective jurors are qualified under Florida Statutes sections 40.01 and 40.013, the jury clerk will qualify all prospective jurors.

5. Scheduling

All administrative judges of subject matter divisions that conduct jury trials will send a yearly schedule of their divisions' designated jury trial weeks to Jury Services.

Jurors will be impaneled every week of the year except for the week of Thanksgiving and any week in December the chief judge may designate. If a holiday falls on a Monday, jurors will be impaneled on the next working day after the Monday holiday.

Any judge picking a jury from a panel consisting of 100 or more jurors must pick on a Wednesday. Otherwise, all judges assigned to circuit civil, circuit criminal, county civil, and county criminal shall select either Monday, Tuesday, or Friday as their primary jury selection day. If a judge needs to request a jury panel on a day other than their primary jury selection day, the judge must notify Jury Services at least eight weeks in advance to ensure adequate juror availability. Judges who do not make a timely request to pick on a day other than their

primary jury selection day may only select a panel after all judges previously scheduled for jury selection on that date have completed their selections.

6. Jury Panel Sizes

In accordance with Florida Supreme Court Administrative Order AOSC06-13, the panel sizes for any jury trial will be as follows:

Type of Case	Panel Size
Death penalty cases	No greater than 50
Other 12-person juries and life felonies	No greater than 40
Sexual battery cases with a child	No greater than 30
Sexual battery cases with no child	No greater than 25
Other circuit criminal cases	No greater than 22
Other circuit civil cases	No greater than 22
Domestic violence cases	No greater than 16
Driving under the influence cases	No greater than 16
Other county cases	No greater than 14

The presiding judge may deviate from these panel size guidelines due to additional parties, lengthy trials, the case being of a high-profile nature, or any other extraordinary circumstance. The jury panel size for cases which are extraordinarily complex, lengthy, or high-profile are left to the discretion of the presiding judge. However, the presiding judge must notify Jury Services of the size of the requested jury panel no less than eight weeks prior to jury selection.

7. Reporting and Assignment Procedures

Unless disqualified, excused, or otherwise advised by the jury clerk, all jurors should report to the Edgecomb Courthouse auditorium on the second floor as indicated on the jury summons. After jurors have taken the oath and are qualified by the jury clerk, the jury clerk will assign the jurors to each court as requested.

No judge may request a panel be sent to the courtroom unless there is a case ready to go to trial and all parties are present in the courtroom. Bailiffs will report to the auditorium when instructed by their judges to escort jurors to the assigned courtrooms. Bailiffs must report to the jury auditorium and enter their judge's name on the sign-up sheet, which is located on the front counter in the Jury Services designated work area. Bailiffs may report as early as 7:30 a.m.

Bailiffs must be present in the jury auditorium immediately after the prospective jurors are qualified to enable the jury clerk to fill a panel. Jury Services will fill panels in the order listed on the sign-up sheet as long as the respective bailiff is present. For example, if Bailiff #1 on the sign-up sheet is not present in the auditorium at the time the clerk is filling a panel, but Bailiff #2 is present, then Jury Services will skip Bailiff #1 and fill the panel for Bailiff #2.

Every judge should attempt to begin voir dire within thirty minutes of the jury panel arriving at the courtroom. If voir dire does not begin within thirty minutes, the judge should consider returning the panel to the jury auditorium for use by other judges.

After a jury is selected in the courtroom, the court clerk will determine from the judge when jurors will be needed again and call or send an e-mail message to the jury clerk in the auditorium to determine if jurors are needed to return to the auditorium. If additional jurors are needed in a courtroom, or if jurors are needed for the selection of another trial, the court clerk will call the jury clerk and request the required number be sent to the courtroom. The bailiff will go to Jury Services and escort jurors to the courtroom. Courtroom clerks will update juror attendance.

8. Electronic Devices

Use of electronic devices by jurors is governed by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.451(b).

9. Previous Administrative Order Superseded

This administrative order supersedes Administrative Order S-2016-024 (*Jury Management*).

10. Effective Date

This administrative order is effective July 1, 2025.

ENTERED on June 18th, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris C. Sabella". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Christopher C. Sabella, Chief Judge

Attachment: Panel Size Guidelines

Original to: Victor D. Crist, Clerk of the Court

Copy to: All Judges

Chad Chronister, Sheriff

Susan S. Lopez, State Attorney

Lisa B. McLean, Public Defender

Jury Services

Panel Size Guidelines

Panel Size Guidelines for Typical Cases			Guidelines for Exempted Cases**
Case Type	Guideline	Acceptable Deviations* (with approval of presiding judge)	Jury Panel Size to be Established by the Presiding Judge and Parties (Prompt notification to jury managers will be required.)
Death penalty cases	No greater than 50	Plus 3 for each additional defendant; or Plus 3 for lengthy trials; or Plus 3 for high profile trials; or Plus 3 for extraordinary circumstances.	
Other 12 person juries (criminal or civil) and life felonies	No greater than 40	Plus 3 for each additional defendant/party; or Plus 3 for lengthy trials; or Plus 3 for high profile trials; or Plus 3 for extraordinary circumstances.	
Sexual battery cases w/ child	No greater than 30	Plus 3 for each additional defendant; or Plus 3 for lengthy trials; or Plus 3 for high profile trials; or Plus 3 for extraordinary circumstances.	
Sexual battery cases no child	No greater than 25	Plus 3 for each additional defendant; or Plus 3 for lengthy trials; or Plus 3 for high profile trials; or Plus 3 for extraordinary circumstances.	
Other circuit criminal cases	No greater than 22	Plus 2 for each additional defendant; or Plus 2 for lengthy trials; or Plus 2 for high profile trials; or Plus 2 for extraordinary circumstances.	
Other circuit civil cases	No greater than 22	Plus 2 for each additional party; or Plus 2 for lengthy trials; or Plus 2 for high profile trials; or Plus 2 for extraordinary circumstances.	
Domestic violence cases	No greater than 16	Plus 2 for each additional party; or Plus 2 for lengthy trials; or Plus 2 for high profile trials; or Plus 2 for extraordinary circumstances.	
Driving under the influence cases	No greater than 16	Plus 2 for each additional defendant; or Plus 2 for lengthy trials; or Plus 2 for high profile trials; or Plus 2 for extraordinary circumstances.	
Other county cases	No greater than 14	Plus 2 for each additional defendant/party; or Plus 2 for lengthy trials; or Plus 2 for high profile trials; or Plus 2 for extraordinary circumstances.	

*These deviations from the guidelines must be approved by the presiding judge. Deviations may be cumulative given case specifics. However, such deviations should not exceed 20 jurors above the guideline. Lengthy trials are those predicted to last more than five days. High profile trials are those receiving a significant amount of publicity as determined by the presiding judge. Extraordinary circumstances are any other factors that may impact the voir dire process as determined by the presiding judge.

**Exemptions may be granted for complex, lengthy, or high profiles cases as determined by the presiding judge.