IN THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER S-2025-057
(Supersedes Administrative Order S-2024-038)

CIVIL TRAFFIC DIVISION

Based on a need to update the Clerk of the County Court's ability to grant continuances in accordance with Florida Rule of Traffic Court 6.480(b), it is necessary for the proper and efficient administration of justice to update the administrative provisions in the Civil Traffic Division.

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

1. Traffic Violations Bureau

A Traffic Violations Bureau within the office of the Clerk of the County Court will function and operate in accordance with Florida Traffic Court Rule of Procedure 6.100.

2. Divisions

Civil traffic matters of the county court will be administered by two judicial divisions and one civil traffic infraction hearing officer division. The two judicial divisions are designated as Tampa-based Civil Traffic Division "M" and East Civil Traffic Division "W." The civil traffic infraction hearing officer division is designated as Division Z-2. The Clerk of the County Court ("clerk") will designate on the progress docket the division to which each case is assigned. Thereafter, each case will be heard, tried and determined by the judge or hearing officer presiding over the assigned division.

3. Hearing Officers

The Civil Traffic Infraction Hearing Officer Program, originally established in 1989, continues in accordance with sections 318.30 – 318.38, Florida Statutes, and Florida Traffic Court Rule of Procedure 6.630. Appointed hearing officers, assigned to Division Z-2, are independent contractors and contract with the trial court

administrator. If the regularly-scheduled hearing officer is absent, due to illness, vacation or other reasons, an alternate hearing officer will preside.

4. Assignment of Cases

A. Tampa Divisions

i. *Division Z-2*

All civil traffic infractions in which the infraction occurs outside of the East Division and which are eligible to be heard by a hearing officer are assigned to Hearing Officer Division Z-2. Such infractions will be disposed of by the hearing officer in Division Z-2 except for cases: (a) issued in conjunction with a criminal traffic offense; (b) involving an accident resulting in injury or death; or (c) in which the alleged offender, within 30 days of the issuance of the citation, requests in writing for the case to be heard by a county judge.

ii. *Conjunctive Criminal Case*

Civil traffic infractions issued in conjunction with a criminal traffic offense will be transferred to and disposed of in the appropriate county criminal division.

iii. *Division "M"*

Civil traffic infractions involving an accident resulting in injury or death, or in which the alleged offender, within 30 days of the issuance of the citation, requests in writing for the case to be heard by a county judge, will be transferred to and disposed of in Civil Traffic Division "M."

B. Plant City Division

i. *Conjunctive Criminal Case*

Civil traffic infractions issued in conjunction with a criminal traffic offense will be transferred to and disposed of in the appropriate county criminal division: East County Criminal Division "X" or East County Criminal Division "X2."

ii. *Division "W"*

All civil traffic infractions in which the infraction occurs within the East Division and are not issued in conjunction with a criminal traffic offense will be filed and disposed of in East Civil Traffic

Division "W."

5. Change of Plea

All alleged civil traffic offenders entering a plea of not guilty are prohibited from changing their plea unless the change of plea is made in open court.

6. Continuances

In accordance with Florida Rule of Traffic Court 6.480(b), the clerk is authorized to automatically grant alleged offenders 60 days from the Clerk's filed date to pay the citation. A continuance after a case is set for trial may be granted only by the judge or hearing officer to whom the case is assigned and only upon good cause being shown upon written motion.

7. Child Restraint Safety Program

A. Course Approval

In accordance with the child restraint requirements of section 316.613, Florida Statutes, a person who violates the provisions of this section may elect, with the court's approval, to participate in a child restraint safety program approved by the chief judge. In light of this approval authority, any child restraint safety course approved by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles under section 316.613(5), Florida Statutes, is hereby approved as a child restraint safety program.

B. Process

The clerk will provide a plea election form to any person who wishes to make an election. Upon a person's election the clerk will record the case as adjudication withheld. Within 60 days of the date of the plea election, any person making an election must file with the clerk a certification from the service provider indicating the person successfully completed the child restraint safety program. A person who elects to attend a child restraint safety program but who subsequently fails to provide the clerk with a course completion certification within 60 days will be deemed to have admitted the infraction and the clerk will record an adjudication of guilty. The clerk will then notify the offender and the Department of Highway

Safety and Motor Vehicles of such failure and of the penalty incurred and court costs due.

8. Reassignment upon Disqualification

A. Hearing Officer

If a hearing officer determines it is necessary to disqualify himself or herself, the clerk will reassign the case to Tampa Civil Traffic Division "M."

B. Tampa Divisions

If the judge presiding in Civil Traffic Division "M" enters an order of disqualification, the clerk will reassign the case to a Tampa County Civil Division based on a random equitable distribution.

C. Plant City Division

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

9. Previous Administrative Order Superseded

This administrative order supersedes Administrative Order S-2024-038 (*Civil Traffic Division*).

10. Effective Date

This administrative order is effective immediately.

ENTERED on October 31, 2025.

Christopher C. Sabella, Chief Judge

Original: Victor Crist, Clerk of the Court
Copy: All County Civil Division Judges
All Civil Traffic Infraction Hearing Officers