

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

**ORDER REQUIRING PRIOR COURT APPROVAL FOR REMOTE APPEARANCE AND SETTING
STANDARDS FOR VIDEO CONFERENCE (ZOOM) PARTICIPATION**

The Court, having considered the applicable Administrative Orders of the Florida Supreme Court and the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit governing the conduct of remote proceedings, and being otherwise fully advised in the premises, finds that the use of video technology is permitted only upon prior authorization of the presiding judge and that clear standards are necessary to ensure decorum, identification, and the integrity of the record.

Accordingly, it is **ORDERED AND ADJUDGED** as follows:

1. Requirement of Prior Court Approval

1.1 No defendant may appear remotely without the express prior permission of the presiding judge. Requests to appear remotely must be made in writing or on the record, stating specific reasons (such as distance, health, or hardship). The Court will determine, in its discretion, whether a remote appearance is appropriate for the scheduled proceeding.

1.2 Approval to appear remotely may be withdrawn at any time if the Court determines that the defendant's conduct, appearance, or environment fails to comply with this Order or otherwise undermines the integrity of the proceedings.

2. Authorized Remote Appearance

If permission is granted, the defendant shall appear via **Zoom** using the credentials provided in the notice of hearing. The defendant must log in at least ten (10) minutes before the scheduled time and remain in the virtual waiting room until admitted by the Court.

3. Mandatory Conditions for Remote Appearance

When appearing remotely, each defendant must:

- (a) Have their **camera on and remain visible** throughout the hearing unless excused by the Court. The defendant's face and upper torso must remain visible at all times.
- (b) Present a **valid government-issued photo identification** (e.g., Florida driver's license, state ID, or passport) when requested to verify identity.
- (c) Be **dressed in professional attire**, appropriate for a court appearance (such as one would wear to a church service or funeral).
- (d) Participate from a **professional and quiet setting** that reflects the decorum of a courtroom—such as a private room, free of distractions and third parties.

4. Prohibited Conduct and Settings

The following conduct and environments are deemed inappropriate for a court appearance and will be treated as a **failure to appear** unless otherwise excused by the Court:

- Appearing while in bed, or lying down;
- Appearing while driving, riding in a vehicle, or attending another appointment (such as a hair or nail salon);
- Appearing from a restroom;
- Having visible drugs, paraphernalia, or open alcohol containers in view;
- Smoking, vaping, or consuming substances during the hearing;
- Appearing in a manner or location that interferes with the dignity or integrity of the proceedings; or
- Any other conduct the Court deems inappropriate or disrespectful.

5. Consequences of Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this Order—including appearing without prior court authorization, appearing in an inappropriate manner, or failing to appear entirely—**SHALL BE TREATED AS A FAILURE TO APPEAR** under *section 901.11, Florida Statutes*. The court may issue a bench warrant for arrest, hold the defendant in contempt of court pursuant to *Fla. R. Crim. P. 3.830 or 3.840*, or impose other lawful sanctions.

The Court may consider verified technical failures or documented emergencies as good cause and may excuse the appearance upon sufficient showing.

6. Recording and Privacy

Only the official court record constitutes the record of these proceedings. Recording, screenshotting, or rebroadcasting by participants is prohibited absent prior written authorization of the Court.

ORDERED at Hillsborough County, Florida on December 1, 2025.



Monique M. Scott
County Court Judge