

Security Update for Attorneys

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office has initiated the final phases of the transition of security screening at the Hillsborough County courthouses. Contract security screeners under the supervision of the Sheriff's Office began work on January 4th, replacing Hillsborough County Security Service personnel. The move completes the transition of security screening to the control of the Sheriff's Office as part of the county's recent budget cuts, but the move also meant a \$1.5 million dollar budget reduction for security.

The Sheriff's Office, working within those fiscal constraints, and confronted with dramatic increases in the numbers of persons entering the downtown court complex, has made several changes to address efficiency. Lawyers arriving at the courthouse as of January 4th have been granted access to a "merge" lane by presenting their Florida Bar membership card. The merge lane allows lawyers to move through the screening process in a more expeditious manner, and in the months to come lawyers will also be granted access to other restricted screening points. The use of the Bar Association card is a temporary practice, as the Hillsborough County Bar Association will be assisting the Sheriff's Office in the issuance of photo identification/access cards similar to other jurisdictions. The process for obtaining these cards will be published in the coming weeks, but lawyers who intend to seek the card can prepare by securing digital photographs of any intended applicants. Once the cards have been issued, the Florida Bar Association card will no longer be accepted.

Colonel Jim Previterra
Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office
Department of Detention Services
Post Office Box 3371
Tampa, Florida 33602-3371
(813) 247-8318