

**AMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER GOVERNING COURT PRACTICES
FOR REQUESTING ACCOMMODATION FOR SERVICE AND EMOTIONAL
SUPPORT ANIMALS INSIDE THE COURTHOUSES OF
THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT**

Pursuant to Rule 2.540 of the Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration the purpose of this Administrative Order is to establish guidelines and procedures for requesting accommodations for service and emotional support animals within all courthouse facilities¹ of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court.

By the power vested in the chief judge under Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, section 43.26, Florida Statutes, and Rule 2.215 of the Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration, effective **immediately**, unless otherwise provided herein, to continue until further order and superseding any provisions in prior Administrative Orders that may be inconsistent, it is **ORDERED**:

1. DEFINITIONS:

a. “Service animals” means any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. This definition excludes animals that provide crime deterrence or emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship.

¹ For purposes of this Administrative Order, the term “courthouse facility” or “courthouse facilities” means any building or structure in which judicial proceedings may be conducted, including, but not limited to: (1) Orange County Courthouse, located at 425 North Orange Avenue, Orlando, Florida 32801; (2) Jon B. Morgan Osceola County Courthouse, located at 2 Courthouse Square, Kissimmee, Florida 34741 (including the Osceola County Historical Courthouse, located at 3 Courthouse Square, Kissimmee, Florida 34741); (3) Thomas S. Kirk Justice Center, located at 2000 East Michigan Street, Orlando, Florida 32806; (4) Orange County Booking and Release Center, located at 3855 South John Young Parkway, Orlando, Florida 32839; (5) Orange County Branch Courthouse – Apopka, located at 1111 North Rock Springs Road, Apopka, Florida 32712; (6) Orange County Branch Courthouse – Ocoee, located at 475 Story Road, Ocoee, Florida 34761; and (7) Orange County Branch Courthouse – Winter Park, located at 4037 Metric Drive, Winter Park, Florida 32792.

b. “Emotional support animal” means any dog that provides needed emotional support, well-being, or comfort to an individual in the forms of affection and companionship. Emotional support animals are not trained to do any specific work or tasks for the benefit of an individual.

2. PROCESS TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATION:

a. Service Animals: The court shall allow the use of a service animal by an individual with a disability in all courthouse facilities and when participating in all programs or activities provided by the courts, as provided in and subject to the requirements of the ADA and Florida law.

Subject to the requirements of the ADA, an individual seeking to use a service animal in a scheduled court appearance should notify the court in advance pursuant to the procedures contained herein. The failure to give advance notification shall not preclude the use of a service animal.

b. Service animals are limited to a dog or miniature horse within the courthouse facilities.

c. Please contact the appropriate ADA Coordinator for your scheduled court appearance if you required the use of a service animal during your court appearance.

1. Orange County:

**Human Resources, Orange County Courthouse,
425 N. Orange Avenue, Suite 510, Orlando,
Florida, (407) 836-2303, at least 7 days before
your scheduled court appearance, or immediately
upon receiving this notification if the time before
the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if
you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.**

2. Osceola County:

**Court Administration, Osceola County
Courthouse, 2 Courthouse Square, Suite 6300,
Kissimmee, Florida 34741, (407) 742-2417, at least
7 days before your scheduled court appearance,
or immediately upon receiving this notification if
the time before the scheduled appearance is less
than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired,
call 711.**

d. Emotional Support Animals:

1. The court may permit an individual the use of and accompaniment of an emotional support animal in all courthouse facilities when participating in a scheduled court appearance. Requests for accommodations must be in writing and include a description of the accommodation sought, along with a statement of the impairment that necessitates the accommodation and the duration that the accommodation is to be provided. The court, in its discretion, may require the individual with a disability to provide additional information about the impairment. **Requests for accommodation shall not include any information regarding the merits of the case or any confidential medical records.**

2. Any individual requesting accommodation for an emotional support animal in a courthouse facility for a scheduled court appearance **MUST** file a written request with the presiding judge at least seven (7) days prior to the date of appearance, or immediately upon receiving notification if the time before the scheduled court appearance is less than 7 days. The presiding judge may, in their discretion, waive this requirement. The court, in its discretion, may require the individual with a disability to provide additional information about the impairment if the proposed accommodation may present a fundamental alteration in the court proceeding. However, lack of advance notification of an emotional support animal may result in the animal not being allowed.

3. The judicial assistant will notify the Orange County Sheriff's Office, Court Security Section or the Osceola County Sheriff's Office, Court Security Section, as appropriate, of any preapproved emotional support animal via a notation on the docket, including add-on dockets.

4. Emotional support animals are limited within the courthouse facilities to dogs only. Emotional support animals will not be accommodated in public spaces and non-adjudicatory rooms.²

5. All service animals and emotional support animals are required to be under direct physical control at all times by means of an appropriate leash or other lead. If someone cannot use restraints because of a disability or because use would interfere with the safe and effective performance of work or tasks, then the animal must otherwise be under their control by voice control, signals, or other effective means.

- Animals cannot be left alone for any period of time while in courthouse facilities.
- Animals may not be tied to a fixture or left unattended while in courthouse facilities.
- Animals must be well-behaved and under control at all times.
- The owner of the animal is responsible for the animal's behavior.
- The animal must be housebroken.

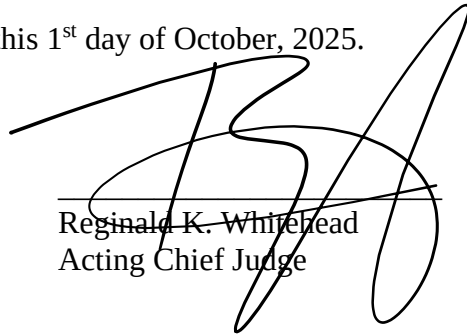
² As used herein, the phrase "non-adjudicatory rooms" excludes courtrooms, hearing rooms, and any other places used to conduct court proceedings, unless specifically stated otherwise.

- The owner is responsible for any injury or damage caused by the animal and the owner must be prepared to clean up any waste the animal produces.
- All approved animals must be in compliance with state and local laws regarding health, licensure, vaccination, and care of the particular type of animal.

Failure to comply with any of these requirements will result in the animal being denied entry or expelled from courthouse facilities.

Administrative Order 2023-05-01 is vacated and set aside except to the extent that it has been incorporated and/or amended herein. Vacating an Administrative Order that vacates a prior Order does not revive the prior Order.

DONE AND ORDERED at Orlando, Florida, this 1st day of October, 2025.



Reginald K. Whitehead
Acting Chief Judge

Copies provided to:

Clerk of Court, Orange County
Clerk of Court, Osceola County
General E-Mail Distribution List
<http://www.ninthcircuit.org>