

Supreme Court of Florida

500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1925

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CLERK OF COURT

WOODROW KERCE II
MARSHAL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Judges of the District Courts of Appeal
Chief Judges of the Circuit Courts

FROM: Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñiz *C. Muñiz*

DATE: September 25, 2025

SUBJECT: Courthouse Security

I understand that the decision in *McDaniels v. State*, 2025 WL 2608688 (Fla. 1st DCA, Sept. 10, 2025), has prompted questions within the judicial branch about chief judges' continued authority to prohibit weapons (including firearms) in courthouses and courtrooms. The court in *McDaniels* reversed a criminal conviction on the ground that the Second Amendment prohibited the application of Florida's "open carry" statute, section 790.053, Florida Statutes, to a defendant who had openly carried a holstered firearm at a major intersection in downtown Pensacola.

Our Court believes that chief judges continue to have the authority to prohibit weapons (including firearms) in courthouses and courtrooms. The exercise of that authority is consistent with the public policy embodied in Florida's gun laws and is grounded in the power granted to chief judges by article V, section 2 of the

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Florida Constitution, by Florida statutes, and by the Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration. Because the case arose in an entirely different context, the *McDaniels* decision's Second Amendment analysis does not address the regulation of firearms in Florida's courthouses and courtrooms.

Our Court defers to chief judges to adopt the security policies they deem appropriate. For reference, attached to this memo is the security policy governing the Florida Supreme Court Building.

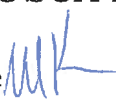
Thank you for your commitment to the administrative supervision of the courts.

CGM:ewm

Attachment

cc: Supreme Court Marshal Woodrow Kerce II
Marshals of the District Courts of Appeal
Trial Court Administrators

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Supreme Court and OSCA Employees
FROM: Marshal Woodrow Kerce 
DATE: June 13, 2025
SUBJECT: Security Procedures

Security of the Florida Supreme Court Building (Building) and grounds is accomplished by a system of controlled access card readers, surveillance cameras, and physical presence. **Please note that all employees are expected to adhere to the security policies and procedures as set forth within this memorandum.** Employees are further advised that the failure to follow these established security protocols could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Access Control Cards:

All employees will be issued a Florida Supreme Court Identification and Access card (access card) by the Marshal's Office. The Marshal's Office Security Control Center is located on the 1st Floor of the Building adjacent to the Breakroom.

Your access card is a sensitive and controlled item, so safeguarding it at all times is essential for Building safety and security. The Marshal's Office will provide access cards to all employees, interns, vendors, and volunteers upon successful completion of a mandatory level 2 background check.

All employees must card in and out of the Building. Do not allow anyone to use your access card or use your access card to allow anyone into the Building for any reason. All employees must display their access cards at all times while in the Building, and access cards should not be displayed outside of the Building.

If an employee loses or does not have their access card when attempting to enter the Building, they should report this status to a Deputy Marshal or the Marshal's Office. A lost access card will be disabled, and the employee will be issued a new access card immediately. If an employee's access card was inadvertently left at home, a temporary access card will be issued for a 24-hour period.

Visitors:

All visitors will be screened by a Deputy Marshal, and should enter the Building through the Front Entrance. Deputy Marshals will screen visitors entering the facility with the use of a magnetometer, x-ray machine, and physical check of all containers, bags, and boxes. Prior to the visitor's arrival, the Marshal's Office should be notified of the visitor's name, arrival time, (if known), department they are visiting, and contact name for an escort from the indicated department. All visitors should be escorted by employees from the department they are visiting, and should remain with their escort at all times.

Screening:

Beginning July 1, 2025, all employees (except Justices, Judicial Assistants and authorized employees of the Marshal's Office) must immediately present themselves to the nearest security screening checkpoint for screening after carding into the Building. Employees having on-site garage access and parking should report to the 1st Floor West Entrance (rear employee entrance) Security Checkpoint for screening after carding into the Building. Employees must be rescreened if they leave and re-enter the Building at any point during the day.

The Building is open between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and is closed during weekends and holidays. During normal business hours, all visitors will be screened at either the front or back Building entrance. The designated ADA access to the Building is through the 1st Floor West Entrance (rear employee entrance). Visitors utilizing the ADA access for entry and those accompanying them will be screened by

a Deputy Marshal and escorted to their destination. Additionally, all packages entering the Court will be x-rayed or physically checked by a Deputy Marshal.

During Building closures and after normal business hours, authorized access to the Building is through the 1st Floor West Entrance (rear employee entrance). Any employee entering the Building outside of normal business hours should notify the Security Operations Center (850-922-5270) and meet the on-duty Deputy Marshal at the rear employee entrance for screening. All after-hours visitors should also be screened and signed into the logbook located at the rear security desk.

Weapons:

The possession of any weapon is prohibited in the Building, except by authorized employees of the Marshal's Office. Specifically, the term weapon, includes, but is not limited to: firearms, fixed blade knives, folding knives (4-inch blade or longer), explosives, aerosol spray, screwdriver(s), pepper spray/mace, ice picks, razors, or any other items that could be used as a weapon. These or similar items will not be allowed into any section of the Building.

Please report any suspicious person, activities, packages, or substances to the Marshal's Office immediately. Do not touch or move suspicious items. Please also report all suspicious or threatening phone calls and e-mails to the Marshal's Office immediately.

Parking:

Deputy Marshals will ensure that only authorized vehicles are allowed to park in the Building's on-site parking lots. Parking lot gate access remotes (fobs) will be issued to all authorized full-time or part-time employees. If an employee loses their fob, they should report this status to the Marshal's Office immediately. The lost fob will be disabled, and the employee will be issued a new fob.

A license plate check will be conducted on all unauthorized vehicles located in the Building's on-site parking lots. A Deputy Marshal will attempt to locate or contact the driver/owner of any unauthorized vehicle. If a Deputy Marshal is unable to establish contact with the driver/owner, the vehicle will be towed from the Building's parking lot at the owner's expense.

Threats to Employees:

Any threat to employees will be evaluated immediately. If the threat is deemed "credible," the following actions will be taken:

- (1) All Marshal's Office staff and the Marshal will be notified immediately.
- (2) All relevant information will be collected on the person(s) making the threat (e.g. - criminal history, vehicular information, identification, etc.).
- (3) All other state/federal law enforcement agencies will be informed as deemed appropriate, and local law enforcement will be contacted for additional assistance, if needed.

Threatening Telephone Call:

If an employee receives a threatening call, the following steps should be taken:

- (1) The call should be terminated.
- (2) The employee should immediately make note of the caller ID name and telephone number.
- (3) The employee should immediately notify the Marshal's Office.

Receiving Call/Bomb/Chemical/Biological Threat:

It is very important employees take any threat(s) very

seriously, and that appropriate action be taken immediately to safeguard the Building and all occupants. If an employee receives a bomb threat, the following steps should be taken:

- (1) The employee should keep the caller on the phone as long as possible.
- (2) The employee should ask the caller as many questions as possible.
- (3) The employee should write down as much of the conversation as possible and complete the Bomb Threat form (attached).
- (4) The employee should immediately notify the Marshal's Office.

Suspicious Packages:

The following guidelines should be followed upon finding suspicious packages:

- (1) The employee should note the description, location found and notify the Marshal's Office.
- (2) Employees should look for the following things when determining if a package is suspicious:
 - (a) Excessive postage;
 - (b) Misspelled names;
 - (c) Wrong titles;
 - (d) Messy and/or oily wrapping;
 - (e) Items not in the norm;
 - (f) Ticking packages;
 - (g) Packages with odor; or
 - (h) Packages in unusual locations.
- (3) When an employee finds a suspicious object, they should assume it to be a threat, and take the following steps:

- (a) DO NOT TOUCH THE OBJECT;
- (b) Immediately notify the Marshal's Office;
- (c) Provide a description and location of the object;
- (d) Provide their telephone number;
- (e) Mark and block off the immediate area;
- (f) If possible, close doors to minimize blast effects; and
- (g) Follow all instructions provided by Marshal's Office.

Emergency Evacuation Plan:

An evacuation plan minimizes the risk of death or injury to Building occupants, which could result from a fire, bomb threat, bio-chemical threat, workplace violence, civil disorder, natural disaster, and other threatening situations. The Florida Supreme Court Emergency Evacuation Plan:

- (1) Provides for the ability to rapidly and safely evacuate the Building with minimal confusion and panic in the event of an emergency; and
- (2) Provides accountability of all personnel in the Building during and after an emergency evacuation.

Please identify your Floor Warden and be familiar with the Emergency Evacuation Plan. When evacuating the Building, the following events are anticipated to occur:

- (1) There will be a fire alarm system activation (strobe/horn units). Employees should evacuate, unless they are informed otherwise via the public address system that an evacuation is cancelled.
- (2) Floor Wardens should put on a vest and retrieve their Floor Warden kits.
- (3) Safety Officers should put on traffic vest and assume their safety duties.

- (4) Designated Marshal's Office personnel will put on their traffic/safety vests.
- (5) Floor Wardens should be aware of all rallying areas and should do the following:
 - (a) Ensure that all personnel are a minimum of 300 feet from the Building;
 - (b) Close all doors, but do not lock them;
 - (c) Verify with Section Wardens that all assigned individuals are accounted for and report the same to Blue Vest Officers at rallying area; and
 - (d) Blue Vest Officers will report to the Marshal's Office representative.
- (6) When preparing to evacuate, employees should gather only necessary personal or identification items (e.g. - driver's license, vehicle and house keys, billfold, or purses).
- (7) Employees should exit the Building at the direction of the Floor Wardens and stay to the far right in stairwells.

Please contact Florida Supreme Court Marshal's Office to obtain any additional information, assistance, or clarification about any of the security policies or procedures outlined in this memorandum. Thank you for your cooperation with these matters.

WK:cew 

Attachment