

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ATTORNEYS
RE: PINELLAS CIRCUIT CIVIL SECTIONS 54 AND 44 – CLOSURE

3/10/17

Pursuant to Administrative Order 2017-019 PI-CIR, the Court is closing county civil Sections 54 (county section) and 44 (small claims section) effective April 13, 2017.

Effective March 15, 2017, all cases in section 54 that are in a “open” or “reopened” posture will be assigned to sections 39 and 40, and all cases in section 44 that are in a “open” or “reopened” posture will be assigned to sections 45 and 46.

Hearings that are currently scheduled between now and April 13, 2017, will remain scheduled in the current section. If you need to set a hearing, or cancel or reschedule a hearing before April 13, 2017, please contact the office of the judge of the section to which the case is **currently** assigned.

When a motion is filed that re-opens a case assigned to sections 54 or 44, the Clerk will assign the matter in accordance with the Administrative Order for the assignment of civil, family law, county civil and small claims divisions in Pinellas County.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience.

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PASCO AND PINELLAS COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2017-009 PI-CIR

RE: PINELLAS COUNTY CIVIL SECTIONS 54 AND 44 – CLOSURE

This Administrative Order sets a date for the reassignment of county civil cases from sections 54 to sections 39 and 40, and for the reassignment of small claims cases from section 44 to sections 45 and 46, and provides for matters currently scheduled to be heard in sections 54 and 44. In accordance with Article V, section 2, Florida Constitution, Rules of Judicial Administration 2.215, and section 43.26, Florida Statutes,

IT IS ORDERED:

For County Civil Cases:

1. Effective close of business April 13, 2017, all cases in section 54 will have been reassigned to sections 39 and 40. In order to implement this change, the Clerk is directed effective March 15, 2017, to reassign to sections 39 and 40 all open cases in section 54; however, the section 54 judge, Judge Hessinger, will continue to schedule and hear cases through April 13, 2017. Any hearings in these cases to be heard after April 13, 2017, must be scheduled before the new section judge.
2. These cases are to be reassigned to sections 39 and 40 in a manner that results in approximately the same number of cases assigned to each section. In completing the re-assignments, if the judge in section 39 or 40 has entered an order of recusal from all cases involving that party or attorney, the case should not be re-assigned to that section, but should be reassigned to another St. Petersburg section where the judge has not entered an order of recusal.
3. No later than March 15, 2017, the Clerk is directed to take the following steps to provide notice of all cases to be assigned to a new section in accordance with paragraph 1 and 2 “For County Civil Cases” and paragraphs 1 and 2 “For Small Claims Cases” of this Administrative Order:
 - a. Post a notice on the Clerk’s website;
 - b. Send an email notification through the local bar associations and the Fort Lauderdale bar association;
 - c. Provide hard copy notices at the Clerk’s counter;
 - d. Identify major law firms, both plaintiff and defense, and send email notification; and
 - e. Make docket/event entry in Odyssey that will alert parties of the new sections assignments effective April 13, 2017.
4. After the above cases are reassigned, the Clerk shall confirm to the Chief Judge that Odyssey only includes cases in section 54 that are closed.

5. When a motion is filed that re-opens a case assigned to section 54, the Clerk is directed to assign the matter to sections 39 and 40 in accordance with the Administrative Order for the assignment of civil, family law, county civil and small claims divisions in Pinellas County.

For Small Claims Cases:

1. Effective close of business April 13, 2017, cases in section 44 are being reassigned to sections 45 and 46. In order to implement this change, the Clerk is directed effective March 15, 2017, to reassign to sections 45 and 46 all open cases in section 44.
2. These cases are to be reassigned to sections 45 and 46 in a manner that results in approximately the same number of cases assigned to each section. In completing the re-assignments, if the judge in section 45 or 46 has entered an order of recusal from all cases involving that party or attorney, the case should not be re-assigned to that section, but should be reassigned to another St. Petersburg section where the judge has not entered an order of recusal.
3. The Clerk is directed to reassign these cases as of March 15, 2017; however, the section 44 judge, Judge Hessinger, will continue to schedule and hear cases through April 13, 2017. Any hearings in these cases to be heard after April 13, 2017, must be scheduled before the new section judge.
4. The Clerk is directed to mail a notification to all counsel of record or parties, if unrepresented, in cases being reassigned from section 44. The notification must include information on how to contact the new section judge, confirm that any matter scheduled to be heard in section 44 on or before April 13, 2017, will be heard by the section 44 judge, that matters to be scheduled after April 13, 2017, must be scheduled with the new section judge, and other information about scheduling, which will be provided by the Court.
5. After the above cases are reassigned, the Clerk shall confirm to the Chief Judge that Odyssey only includes cases in section 44 that are closed.
6. When a motion is filed that re-opens a case assigned to section 44, the Clerk is directed to assign the matter to sections 45 and 46 in accordance with the Administrative Order for the assignment of civil, family law, county civil and small claims divisions in Pinellas County.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida, this _____ day of February, 2017.

ORIGINAL SIGNED ON FEBRUARY 9, 2017
BY ANTHONY RONDOLINO, CHIEF JUDGE

cc: All Pinellas Judges
The Honorable Bernie McCabe, State Attorney
The Honorable Bob Dillinger, Public Defender
The Honorable Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Pinellas County
Gay Inskip, Trial Courts Administrator
Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel, Second District
Ngozi Acholonu, Assistant Regional Counsel
Martin Rose, BTS Executive Director
Tonya Rainwater, Justice CCMS Project Sponsor
Tim Staney, CJIS Coordinator
Bar Associations, Pasco and Pinellas Counties
Law Libraries, Pasco and Pinellas Counties