

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

www.flnb.uscourts.gov

In re:

COURT OPERATIONS AND)	Administrative Order
PROTECTION OF COURT)	No. 20-006
STAFF AND THE PUBLIC)	
DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK)	
_____)	

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING REQUIREMENT FOR ATTORNEYS
TO OBTAIN AND RETAIN ORIGINAL SIGNATURES FROM
DEBTORS FOR ELECTRONIC FILINGS

Filers who have received Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) electronic filing credentials (“Registered Participants”) are governed by this Court’s *Administrative Procedures for Filing, Signing, and Verifying Pleadings and Papers by Electronic Means* (“CM/ECF Order,” see Standing Order No. 11). The CM/ECF Order imposes requirements for Registered Participants to obtain and retain original signatures. Shelter In Place orders may prevent attorneys from timely obtaining original signatures, thereby interfering with their ability to provide appropriate bankruptcy or other relief.

Upon consideration of health advisories issued relating to COVID-19, in recognition of shelter in place orders that have or may be issued by

state or federal agencies, and in order to further safe social distancing practices,

IT IS ORDERED:

1. Effective upon the date of this Order and until further notice, the Court suspends, **subject to the conditions stated below**, the requirement in the CM/ECF Order that Registered Participants retain for four years after the closing of the case documents with original signatures, including Official Form 21, petitions, lists, schedules, statements, pleadings, affidavits, and other documents requiring verification under Fed. R. Bankr. P. 1008 and an unsworn declaration as provided in 28 U.S.C. Section 1746 as set out in the *Administrative Procedures for Filing, Signing, and Verifying Pleadings and Papers by Electronic Means* attached to Standing Order No. 11.
2. This suspension is **expressly conditioned** on the following:
 - a. that before filing the document or pleading in question, the Registered Participant has either
 - i. obtained a digital signature via any commercially available digital signature software that provides

signature authentication and maintains a copy of
the digitally signed document in his or her case file;
or

ii. obtains express written permission from the
signatory to file the document in question.

3. The filing of a document or pleading under this Administrative Order constitutes a certification that the Registered Participant either has obtained the signatory's original, physical signature or has complied with the foregoing conditions.

4. The electronic signature or the written permission shall have the same force and effect as if the Registered Participant possesses the paper original of such document.

5. This Administrative Order does not waive, suspend, limit or alter any other ECF Procedures requirement or provisions of this Court's Local Rules, the Bankruptcy Code, or Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure.

DONE AND ORDERED ON March 20, 2020.



KAREN K. SPECIE

Chief United States Bankruptcy Judge