

**SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
(CHAMPAIGN, MACON, DEWITT, PIATT, MOULTRIE, DOUGLAS)**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020 – 07

TEMPORARY ORDER – COVID-19 PROCEDURE

Effective June 1, 2020

WHEREAS, the 6th Circuit Court has, pursuant to Supreme Court orders and in recognition of the executive orders of the Governor of Illinois, reduced its operations to essential activities;

WHEREAS, for those reasons cited in prior 6th Circuit Administrative Orders entered in March and April of 2020, and reference therein to various orders of the Illinois Supreme Court and the Governor of Illinois, it is necessary and appropriate to update prior administrative orders to ensure access to justice and public safety consistent with the Illinois Supreme Court Guidelines for Resuming Illinois Judicial Branch Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic;

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED with respect to all courthouses within the 6th Judicial Circuit:

1. **Resumption of Court Operations.** The terms of prior 6th Circuit Administrative Orders reducing courtroom operations are repealed and replaced by the following provisions. Effective June 1, 2020, all courtrooms are reopened for limited court operations subject to the oversight of the Chief Judge or respective Presiding Judge in each county, subject to limitations set forth below.
2. **Courtroom Limitations and Reduced Call Size.** The Court will make all reasonable efforts to reduce the number of people present in the courtroom, lobbies, law libraries, and waiting areas at any given time. The Court will, to the extent possible, reduce the number of cases scheduled for each court call. Staggered court times are encouraged, i.e. court calls may be scheduled on the quarter hour or half hour. Each county and courtroom are different, and the Presiding Judge of each county is uniquely positioned to determine best scheduling practices to reduce the number of persons present in the courtroom or court environs. Remote hearings are strongly encouraged in those courtrooms and with those judges able to accommodate such hearings. Individuals who are not a party, a witness, or an attorney with respect to a particular case are strongly discouraged from entering the courthouse. Parties should not bring minor children or other family members to court and such persons may be refused entry in the discretion of the Presiding Judge or Sheriff. Subject to Constitutional limitations, the Presiding Judge may restrict courtroom appearances to litigants, witnesses, and counsel.
3. **Screening.** In consultation with the respective Sheriff of each county, the Presiding Judge may require a health screening at the security checkpoint or point of entry at the courthouse. Said screening may include, but may not be limited to: a temperature check,

an identification check (to assist with possible contact tracing if necessary), required use of hand sanitizer, and/or a written or verbal questionnaire.

4. **Prohibited Entry.** No person will be allowed access to the courthouse if that person:
 - a. Has been diagnosed with, or has had close contact with anyone diagnosed with, COVID-19 in the previous 21 days;
 - b. Has flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptom identified by appropriate health professionals as a symptom of COVID-19;
 - c. Has been directed by a medical provider to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor at home for COVID-19;
 - d. Traveled to, or been in close contact with anyone who has traveled to, any country designated by the CDC as a high-risk location for COVID-19, or had close contact with anyone who has, within the last 21 days.

Anyone turned away or refusing the screening will be asked to leave his/her name and contact address with security so that this information can be passed along to the appropriate courtroom.

5. **Masks / Face Coverings.** All persons in public areas of the courthouse, including attorneys, are strongly encouraged to wear a mask or face covering, and must do so if one is offered. Face coverings may be required in each courtroom as directed by the respective presiding judge. The sheriff may require face coverings for entry into the courthouse.
6. **Precautions.** Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned daily by courthouse personnel. Hand sanitizer should be made available to the public in multiple locations throughout the courthouse and in each courtroom. The public is strongly encouraged to wash hands before and after appearances, maintain social distancing, and use hand sanitizer liberally.
7. **Jury Trials.** There exists now and may exist into the future a backlog of cases scheduled for jury trial due to continuances of jury trials during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are likely to be future continuances of jury trials due to the diminished capacity of the court system to conduct jury trials while complying with health regulations, administrative orders, and pandemic protocols. Until further order, the Presiding Judge of each county shall determine the priority of jury trials and the appropriate courtroom(s) or spaces to accommodate jury trials, voir dire, and juror deliberations. Unless directed otherwise by the Chief Judge or Presiding Judge, any courtroom judge requesting a jury trial to proceed shall submit such case to the Presiding Judge in advance who will then determine which case has the Number 1 rank, which case(s) will be a back-up, and the order of procession. In-custody criminal cases will have priority over other all other cases set for jury trial. The Presiding Judge may order all other cases, including all civil cases, continued. Should this procedure result in a further delay in trial, such continuance, pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Order M.R. 30370 will be excluded from speedy trial computations and the statutory time restrictions applicable to same shall be

tolled until further order of the Illinois Supreme Court. The Presiding Judge of each county is in the best position to determine the ability of each county to accommodate jury trials while still making every reasonable effort to allow for social distancing. The Presiding Judge should implement appropriate courtroom seating restrictions to allow for personal distancing and requiring or allowing attorneys, witnesses, courtroom personnel, and/or jurors to wear face coverings when not speaking.

8. **County Jail.** Each sentencing judge is encouraged to stay or suspend sentences to the county jail of 30 days or less until July 2020 unless public safety requires otherwise. At the request of the Sheriff, upon credible concern that an individual reporting to the jail to serve a sentence has not passed or would not pass the health screen applicable for entry into the courthouse, the Presiding Judge may stay or suspend a sentence of confinement to the county jail for up to 21 days.
9. **Represented Parties in Civil Cases Excused.** Represented parties in civil and family cases are discouraged from attending routine court hearings unless ordered by the judge or directed by their attorney. Attorneys should advise their civil clients not to attend court unless their attendance is strictly necessary given the nature of the hearing at issue.
10. **Weddings.** Wedding ceremonies may be conducted with the approval of the Presiding Judge. The Presiding Judge may authorize wedding ceremonies to be conducted by video conference with instructions provided at the time of license application. Unless otherwise ordered, only the parties to the marriage will be allowed in the courtroom.
11. **Probation.** Probationers must continue to follow the directives of the probation office.
12. **Law Library / Self-Help Centers.** The Presiding Judge is authorized to make any orders reasonably necessary to promote the health and well-being of any patron or worker in the courthouse law library or self-help centers. Said orders may include restricting hours, number of persons, requiring appointments, or closing said sites altogether.
13. **Individual Judge/Courtroom Order.** Attorneys and parties should be aware that individual judges may issue their own guidance on practices in certain courtrooms beginning June 1, 2020 with the approval of the Presiding Judge.
14. **Effective Date.** This administrative order will take effect June 1, 2020 and will supersede those prior administrative orders referenced above. This order may be extended, supplemented, or amended as circumstances require.

Entered this 26th day of May 2020.



Karle Koritz, Chief Judge
Sixth Judicial Circuit