

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2024-2
ORDER AUTHORIZING TWO-WAY AUDIO-VISUAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
TO CONDUCT PRETRIAL HEARINGS

On September 18, 2023, the pretrial release provisions of Public Acts 101- 652 and 102-1104, commonly known as the Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity-Today Act (SAFE-T Act), went into effect. See *Rowe v. Raoul*, 2023 IL 129248.

The pretrial release provisions establish a default rule that all persons charged with an offense shall be eligible for pretrial release on personal recognizance subject to conditions of release that a court finds to be appropriate. 725 ILCS 5/110-2 (West 2022). The SAFE-T Act sets out extensive factors that a court must consider in determining the conditions of release, and the Pretrial Services Act requires that pretrial services agencies investigate and submit written reports to assist the court in determining the appropriate terms and conditions of pretrial release, if any. 725 ILCS 5/110-5 (West 2022); 725 ILCS 185/7 (West 2022).

The SAFE-T Act requires Illinois circuit courts to conduct in-person hearings, under certain circumstances or at certain stages of a case and within statutorily specified timeframes, to determine whether a defendant should be detained or continue in detention and, if not, what conditions of pretrial release should apply (if any). See generally 725 ILCS 5/106D-1, 109-1, 109-2, 110-5, 110-5.2, 110-6, 110- 6.1(West 2022). Defendants have a right to counsel at these hearings. See 725 ILCS 5/110-5 (West 2022) (including a public defender or a licensed attorney appointed by the court). Accordingly, attorneys for the state and defendants must prepare for these hearings, and courts must have the necessary information to proceed with these hearings. See, e.g., 725 ILCS 5/110-5 (West 2022); 725 ILCS 185/7 (West 2022).

The SAFE-T Act permits these hearings to be conducted by two-way audiovisual communication systems if, among other exceptions, the chief judge of the circuit orders the use of those systems due to operational challenges in conducting the hearings in person.

Obtaining the necessary information and conducting any hearings on questions of pretrial detention or conditions of pretrial release within the statutorily specified timeframes requires increased judicial, pretrial, court staff, attorney, law enforcement, and other justice partner resources. The courts have conducted a great number of hearings for newly arrested individuals and for individuals who were in pretrial detention before September 18, 2023. Courts have been taking reasonable steps to address the operational challenges including, but not limited to, adding staff, training existing staff to conduct the investigations and hearings, adjusting court schedules, reconfiguring courtrooms, addressing transportation, logistical, and security issues, and planning for disbursement of the fund established by 55 ILCS 5/3- 4014

(West 2022) to enhance public defender services. The courts will continue to take reasonable steps to address remaining and any developing operational challenges.

Due to the expected high volume of investigations and hearings on pretrial detention or conditions of pretrial release, and the continued still limited resources of circuit courts, state's attorneys, public defenders, law enforcement, and other justice partners, statewide compliance with the SAFE-T Act will only be possible with the use of two-way audio-visual communication systems. Conducting these hearings by two-way audio-visual communication systems is consistent with Illinois Supreme Court Rule 45 (eff. Jan. 1, 2023), the courts of this Circuit have been undertaking remote proceedings in criminal cases consistent with constitutional protections.

FOR THESE REASONS, the Illinois Supreme Court has entered M. R. 31888. There are still circuitwide operational challenges to conducting all hearings relating to pretrial detention or conditions of pretrial release pursuant to the SAFE-T Act in-person for the six (6) months following March 18, 2024, particularly those hearings that must be done within condensed timeframes.

Therefore, pursuant to M. R. 31888 Illinois Supreme Court Order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

1. Due to the current circuitwide operational challenges documented in this Order, there is a basis for the circuit courts of the Fourth Judicial Circuit to use two-way audio-visual communication systems to conduct any hearings relating to pretrial detention and conditions of pretrial release where necessary, and it is hereby so ordered.
2. Nothing in this Order impacts the provisions of the SAFE-T Act that govern the way in which hearings conducted by two-way audio-visual communication systems shall occur, including, but not limited to, the availability of a secure line over which the person in custody and his or her counsel may confer and communicate, the availability of a recording for purposes of an appeal, and the fact that confidential communications between the defendant and defense counsel shall not be recorded and shall be undertaken consistent with constitutional protections. See, e.g., 725 ILCS 5/106D-1(b), 110-6.6(b), and 109-1(g) (West 2022).
3. This Order shall remain in effect until September 18, 2024.

ENTERED: March 20, 2024



Douglas L. Jarman, Chief Judge