

PRESS RELEASE

Coles County Courthouse Procedures for COVID-19 Coronavirus

The Coles County Courts of the 5th Judicial Circuit will continue to be operating but at a reduced capacity performing only essential functions beginning Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and continuing until further order of the Court. The Coles County Courts will take all reasonable measures to minimize personal contact to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. While keeping the courts operational and available to the community, all proceedings must be consistent with public health as well as any further policy directives from federal, state and local public health advisories.

Until further notice, the following Coles County cases and court proceedings are **postponed**:

- Civil Jury Trials
- Traffic cases (TR, DT)
- Misdemeanor cases (CM)
- Probate (P)
- Small Claims (SC)
- Family Court (F,D)
- Child Support
- Law magistrate (LM, L)
- Juvenile cases (except as outlined below)
- Marriages

Parties to the above pending cases who have current court dates set in the next 30 days will be excused from appearing in Court. Attorneys in many civil cases may contact the Court for the purpose of conducting status hearings via telephone.

Each party litigant shall receive an amended notice in the mail upon rescheduling. Litigants are directed to ensure that their mailing address is updated and current. Upon rescheduling, parties may check their new court dates by accessing www.judici.com for Coles County, or, by contacting the Coles County Circuit Clerk's office by phone at (217) 348-0516.

Emergency matters in the above category cases may be scheduled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the presiding judge of that case. Individuals shall contact Coles County Court Administration at (217) 348-0538 for purposes of scheduling emergency matters.

The following court proceedings **will be held** as scheduled, with appearances required for all litigants unless travel or health appearance excuses apply, or, the presiding judge of that case excuses a party's appearance (see below):

- All criminal matters with individuals in-custody
- Criminal felony matters
- Juvenile temporary custody (shelter care)
- Juvenile detention hearings

- Juvenile Adjudicatory and Dispositional Hearings
- Petitions for Emergency Orders of Protection
- Hearings for Plenary Orders of Protection
- Emergency hearings on family matters (D and F cases) as scheduled by the Court
- Mental Health Hearings

In conjunction with IDPH guidelines, **the following individuals should not enter** the courthouse and their appearance in court will be excused if they:

- Have been in any of the following countries with the last 21 days: China, South Korea, Italy, Japan, Iran, or
- Reside or have close contact with anyone who has been in one of those countries listed above within the last 21 days; or
- Have been directed to quarantine, isolate or self-monitor at home for the coronavirus by any medical provider; or
- Have been diagnosed with, or have had close contact with anyone diagnosed with, COVID-19; or
- Have flu-like symptoms including, fever, coughing, sneezing, or shortness of breath

If you are an attorney or litigant and you have a scheduled case or are otherwise required to appear at the courthouse in connection with a court case, but an appearance would be excused because of the health or travel restrictions that have been established, please contact Court Administration at (217) 348-0538 to seek a waiver. If you are unable to appear at a court hearing under these circumstances, and your hearing has not been postponed, you may call (217) 348-0538 to leave a message that will be reviewed and returned by court administrative staff as promptly as possible.

Parties may still file court documents electronically and in the Coles County Circuit Clerk's Office. In addition, parties can make payments on court fines and costs online or at the Circuit Clerk's office.