



**Office of the Chief Judge
15th Judicial Circuit
State of Illinois**

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PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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As it performs essential functions, the Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle and Stephenson County Courts of the 15th Judicial Circuit remain open. Although the present risk level in our area remains low, health care professionals advise we should all minimize contact to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Out of an abundance of caution and in an effort to be proactive, the following measures have been implemented:

I. Employees and Facilities:

All employees have been encouraged to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; stay home when sick; avoid close contact with people who are sick; and clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects

Facility crews at each courthouse shall conduct regular cleanings with an emphasis on first-touch areas such as doorknobs and areas inside elevators and restrooms.

II. Juries:

The Court system cannot function without juries. If you have been summoned for jury duty and are ill, please call the number listed on the jury summons to discuss your situation. Attempts will be made to accommodate your situation.

III. Litigants:

If you have a case scheduled and begin to feel ill, you should consider the following:

- Contact the opposing party or attorney to explore an agreed continuance. If there is no agreement, contact the circuit clerk's office to advise that you are unable to attend court. Judges will consider on a case by case basis whether a continuance of the court date is in order. Providing medical documentation of your condition will likely help.
- Please do not bring to court non litigants such as friends or family.
- Use hand sanitizers and soap dispensers within the courthouse.
- Spread out in the court room and avoid close contact with other individuals.

IV. Courthouse Tours and Educational Events:

All scheduled courthouse tours, trainings and educational events are canceled until further notice.

V. Adult and Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Detention and Residential Facilities

Each county's Director of Court Services and Director of Residential Facilities shall implement a plan to limit in-person contacts and suspend certain large group meetings.

Probationers who are feeling sick or have had contact with someone who is sick should contact their probation officer. Probation clients should also contact their probation officer if they have any questions about their next appointment.

VI. Marriages

We will continue to perform marriages in the courthouse as needed. However, we will allow *only* the couple being married to attend. Please do not bring additional people with you to the courthouse to attend your wedding.

Each county may implement additional restrictions. The current situation is one that presents challenges to the Court's normal operating procedures. We are looking at all of the ways in which we might temporarily alter those procedures to minimize risk while still attending to the Court's core responsibilities. We appreciate the cooperation and patience of the public as we work to implement these changes in procedure.

Chief Judge Robert T. Hanson
Fifteenth Judicial Circuit of Illinois
