



STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE
FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

CHAMBERS OF
KIMBERLY G. KOESTER
CHIEF JUDGE

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PRESS RELEASE

Counties of:
Christian, Clay, Clinton
Effingham, Fayette, Jasper
Marion, Montgomery, Shelby

March 13, 2020

Chief Judge Kimberly G. Koester has announced that the Fourth Judicial Circuit in Effingham County is open and will continue to monitor state and local responses to the coronavirus and will follow guidance provided by state and local public health agencies and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Out of an abundance of caution, the Chief Judge is directing that the following steps be taken to reduce temporarily the number of persons entering the courthouse during this period.

Employees and Facility:

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 are conducting regular cleanings with an emphasis on first-touch areas such as doors knobs and areas inside elevators and restrooms.

Jury Service:

There is a plan in place to reduce the number of trials and number of jurors necessary for service. If you are summoned for jury duty and are experiencing any symptoms of any kind, including flu-like symptoms, have a fever or are coughing or sneezing, contact the Effingham County Circuit Clerk's office on weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Your jury duty service will be deferred to a later date.

Expansion of Remote Court Appearances:

Attorneys or litigants that are unable to be present in courtrooms hearing civil and family matters (except Orders of Protections) may be able to appear remotely through use of conference calls with the court. To schedule said conferences, call the Circuit Clerk's Office in Effingham County at (217) 342-4065.

Criminal cases with individuals that are in custody of the Effingham County Sheriff may be handled through video conferencing and they may not be brought into the open courtroom. Said procedure will be conducted per Administrative Order.

Effingham County Problem Solving Court will be cancelled for a period of 14 days except to those individuals as directed by the Problem Solving Court Team. Staffing of Problem Solving Court will be conducted by video conferencing where available.

Effingham County will continue to perform marriages in the courthouse during this time. 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.

Adult and Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Detention:

The Effingham County Probation Department will remain open. A plan has been implemented to limit in-person contacts and suspension of certain large group meetings.

Certain treatment related group meetings may be cancelled without ramifications or may be relocated to larger areas to accommodate social distancing.

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

State's Attorney Office:

The Effingham County State's Attorney's Office will remain open, however open office hours shall be cancelled until further notice. Parties may still phone in on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. to speak to a representative of the State's Attorney's office regarding their case.

Public Defender Office:

The Effingham County Public Defender's office will remain open but will be subject to the determination of the Public Defender regarding face-to-face appointments. Please call the office if you wish to schedule appointments.

These are precautionary measures only. The health and welfare of all employees and courthouse users is our priority. As more information becomes available or if there are changes to court operations, we will advise.

Judge Kimberly G. Koester
Resident Circuit Judge, Effingham County
Chief Judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit