

**IN THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
CASS AND JOHNSON COUNTIES, MISSOURI**

Administrative Order 2020 - 0316

ORDER

WHEREAS, the existence and spread of the COVID-19 has resulted in the declaration of a world-wide pandemic; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to take steps to protect the health and safety of all employees of the 17th Judicial Circuit, all judicial officers and all attorneys and parties who have court hearings or other business in this Judicial Circuit while also balancing the rights of all said individuals and parties to litigation; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate and necessary to take quick action to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 and to reduce the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the unprecedented circumstances existing at this time warrant this administrative action; and

WHEREAS, countless governmental entities and private businesses have implemented numerous immediate actions and modifications to their normal course of business; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has declared a nationwide State of Emergency and the Governor of the State of Missouri has declared a statewide State of Emergency, to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus spreads between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; and

WHEREAS, a large gathering of individuals without necessary mitigation for the spread of infection may pose a risk of the spread of infectious disease; and

WHEREAS, the Court desires to employ all reasonable and prudent measures to help protect the general public, litigants, lawyers, and employees from the spread of COVID-19 creating this emergency;

WHEREAS, the Presiding Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit has the authority over dockets of this Circuit and the authority to enter Orders affecting the general scheduling of cases in this Circuit.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, effective Monday, March 16, 2020, that the 17th Judicial Circuit will remain open with the following modifications to its operation:

1. The Circuit Clerk is ordered and authorized to suspend the impaneling of all jurors from March 16, 2020 through May 1, 2020. All jury trials scheduled during those weeks are hereby continued and will be rescheduled to a later date unless a criminal defendant has requested a speedy trial; and
2. The Circuit Clerk is ordered and authorized to suspend the impaneling of all jurors for all civil trials from March 16, 2020 through July 31, 2020. All civil jury trials scheduled during those weeks are hereby continued and will be rescheduled at a later date.
3. All divisions of the 17th Judicial Court shall determine appropriate action to mitigate the spread of all diseases for dockets heard in each division. Probation officers shall not appear in person for probation revocation proceedings unless requested by the appropriate judge.
4. Each judicial officer and his/her division staff, along with the staff of any supporting department, shall be responsible for notifying all parties and counsel if their cases/dockets will be postponed, and shall be responsible for rescheduling new hearing dates. If the cases/dockets are **not** being postponed/continued, the Court will also notify all parties and counsel of any special arrangements, such as videoconferencing;
5. All non-essential court-related activities, such as weddings, tours, meetings with outside groups, after-hours classes, social activities, events, and off site meetings will be postponed and rescheduled unless they can be held via video conference or telephone conference to mitigate the spread of all diseases.
6. Judicial officers shall have the discretion to exclude any individuals from their courtrooms, in order to comply with the recommendations of the CDC;
7. All nonessential court-related travel for staff and judicial officers is canceled through the end of April, 2020;

IT IS SO ORDERED.

3-16-2020
Date



Honorable William B. Collins
Presiding Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit