

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI
AT KANSAS CITY**

In Re: COVID-19

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-053

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 16th 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, Kansas City, Missouri Mayor Quinton Lucas (and Mayors of other municipalities in Jackson County) has declared a State of Emergency to allow the City of Kansas City, Missouri to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 and promote the health and safety of Kansas City residents; 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 16th 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 and continuing through Friday, March 27, 2020, unless otherwise specifically set forth below or unless modified or extended in a subsequent administrative order, as follows:

1. The Court Administrator is Ordered and authorized to suspend the impaneling of all jurors for the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020. All jury trials scheduled for the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020 are hereby continued and will be re-scheduled to a later date.

2. In all criminal cases where the defendant is in detention at the Jackson County Detention Center or otherwise in custody at any other detention center or at any other prison, said defendants shall not be personally transported to or brought into court for any hearing. All hearings regarding any such defendants shall be conducted via videoconferencing, including initial appearance and arraignment hearings. Judicial officers have the discretion to allow attorneys to appear by telephone if appropriate and cancel/continue hearings as appropriate and consistent with this Administrative Order. Victims have the statutory right to participate in hearings – that right is not changed by this Administrative Order. However, Judges are encouraged to identify alternative methods for victims to participate in any hearings.

3. All large volume, high volume and/or multi-case dockets, including but not limited to, Associate Circuit Court high volume dockets, Circuit Court civil case management dockets, Associate and Circuit Court domestic “call” dockets, landlord/tenant dockets/cases, small claims dockets/cases, uncontested dissolution dockets/cases, traffic and municipal dockets/cases, treatment court dockets, shall be postponed and rescheduled, provided however that each judicial officer has the discretion to conduct said dockets via telephone or videoconferencing in lieu of postponement/continuance.

Each judicial officer and his/her division staff shall be responsible for notifying all parties and counsel if the cases/dockets are being postponed/continued or if the cases/dockets are not being postponed/continued, of the manner in which hearings will be held. If cases/dockets are postponed/continued, each judicial officer and his/her division staff shall be responsible for re-scheduling new hearing dates.

4. Pursuant to Section 455.040.1 R.S.Mo. and for good cause as demonstrated in this Administrative Order, all hearings on full orders of protection that are scheduled for the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020 will be continued for two weeks from the date of the currently scheduled hearing. All Ex Parte Orders of Protection currently in existence will be extended by operation of this Administrative Order until the new hearing date.

5. Separate from the above matters, individual hearings on specific criminal, civil, domestic and probate cases will proceed as currently scheduled unless the specific Judge assigned to that case takes action pursuant to this Administrative Order. Judicial officers are strongly encouraged to conduct any such hearings via videoconferencing if possible or consider alternative means to conduct said hearings. Additionally, judicial officers are strongly encouraged to continue such hearings consistent with this Administrative Order and guidelines from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention.

6. Regarding hearings scheduled at the Juvenile Justice Center, all detention hearings and protective custody hearings will proceed as scheduled. All other hearings in abuse and neglect cases, including Family Drug Court, and termination of parental rights cases which are scheduled during the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020 will be continued and re-scheduled by the individual judicial officers. Hearings for juveniles held in judicial custody within the Juvenile Detention Center shall be held during this two week period;

however, the judicial officers shall have the discretion to exclude individuals to comply with recommendations of the CDC. All other hearings regarding delinquency matters will be continued and reset.

7. The Court Administrator/Deputy Court Administrator is authorized to suspend programming operated by the Family Court Services consistent with this Administrative Order and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines.

8. All nonessential court related travel for staff and judicial officers is canceled through the end of March 2020.

9. All municipal courts in Jackson County, Missouri are subject to this Administrative Order and are encouraged to take appropriate action consistent with this Administrative Order and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

March 12, 2020
Date



David M. Byrn
Presiding Judge