

**PUBLIC NOTICE REGARDING CASS COUNTY COURTS OPERATION EFFECTIVE 3/24/20**

Following the Declaration of Emergency by Governor Whitmer regarding the spread of the COVID-19 Virus and the Governor's subsequent Stay Home Stay Safe Order, Chief Judge Susan L. Dobrich, of the Cass County Courts, in collaboration with the other Cass County Judges and the Cass County Court Administration team, hereby provides the public with notice of the following Court Operations Plan:

- A. All Cass County Courts will be following the directives of Administrative Order 2020-2 from the Michigan Supreme Court, attached hereto, including:
  - a. Limited access to courtrooms and other spaces to no more than 10 persons, including staff;
  - b. Limited court activity to only essential functions; and,
  - c. Conducting all essential matters remotely using two-way communication or telephone or other remote participation tools.
  
- B. During the state of emergency, essential Court staff shall perform essential Court functions as well as performing any other necessary essential functions as directed by the Chief Judge or regarding case-related matters, the assigned Judge or the Clerk, as applicable.
  
- C. Case-related questions should be directed to the following persons:
  - a. District Court, Nancy Brown, [fourthdc@cassco.org](mailto:fourthdc@cassco.org), 269-445-4424, x3252
    - i. District Court filings
    - ii. Arraignments
    - iii. Extradition
    - iv. Probable Cause
    - v. Ex parte requests for relief or other emergency matters for District Court
  
  - b. Circuit Court File Room, Emily Bogue, [ccfileroom@cassco.org](mailto:ccfileroom@cassco.org), 269-445-4416, x3120
    - i. Circuit Court filings
    - ii. Ex parte requests for relief or other emergency matters for the Circuit Court File Room
  
  - c. Probate Court, Kelley James-Jura, [kellej@casco.org](mailto:kellej@casco.org), 269-445-4454, x3282
    - i. Probate Court filings
    - ii. Ex parte requests for relief or other emergency matters involving the elderly or other vulnerable persons in the Probate Court
    - iii. Infectious disease petitions

- d. Court Administrator/Friend of the Court, Carol Bealor, [foc@cassco.org](mailto:foc@cassco.org), 269-445-4482
    - i. Ex parte requests for relief or other emergency matters for Circuit Civil and Criminal
    - ii. Ex parte requests for relief or other emergency matters involving children in the Family Court
    - iii. PPO's
    - iv. Any other emergency matters related to the Friend of the Court, Circuit Court, Probate Court, or Family Court
  - e. Friend of the Court Financial Case Management Supervisor, Donella Kujawa, [donellak@cassco.org](mailto:donellak@cassco.org), 269-445-4436, x3217
    - i. Child support processing
    - ii. Other essential Friend of the Court functions
  - f. Juvenile Court, Leigh Feldman, [leighf@cassco.org](mailto:leighf@cassco.org), 269-445-4444, x3234
    - i. Juvenile Court filings
    - ii. Ex parte requests for relief or other emergency matters in the Juvenile Court
  - g. Adjournments, scheduling, and other administrative matters related to performing the Court's essential functions:
    - i. Lisa Withers (Judge Dobrich), [lisaw@cassco.org](mailto:lisaw@cassco.org), 269-445-4452, option 1
    - ii. Julia Smith (Judge Herman), [julias@cassco.org](mailto:julias@cassco.org), 269-445-4412, option 1
    - iii. Audra Springsteen (Judge Rentfrow), [audras@cassco.org](mailto:audras@cassco.org), 269-445-4424, x3212
    - iv. Emily Bogue (Judge Dobrich and Judge Herman, Circuit Court File Room), [ccfileroom@cassco.org](mailto:ccfileroom@cassco.org), 269-445-4416, x3120
- D. The Judges may back each other up for any of the essential Court functions and as needed as determined necessary by the Judges per cross assignment orders.
- E. This plan is subject to immediate review and modification, further declarations from the Governor, or orders from the Michigan Supreme Court.

Effective: March 24, 2020



Susan L. Dobrich, Chief Judge, Cass County Courts

# Order

Michigan Supreme Court  
Lansing, Michigan

March 18, 2020

Bridget M. McCormack,  
Chief Justice

ADM File No. 2020-08

David F. Viviano,  
Chief Justice Pro Tem

Administrative Order No. 2020-2

Stephen J. Markman  
Brian K. Zahra  
Richard H. Bernstein  
Elizabeth T. Clement  
Megan K. Cavanagh,  
Justices

Order Limiting Activities/  
Assemblages in Court Facilities

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To confront this unprecedented public health crisis, Michigan trial courts must ensure that court facilities are taking every measure possible to protect the public and court personnel. In EO 2020-11, Governor Whitmer ordered restrictions on assemblages to no more than 50 people. President Trump has issued guidelines urging the public to avoid assemblages of more than 10 people and practice social distancing.

Pursuant to 1963 Const, Art VI, §4, which provides for the Supreme Court's general superintending control over all state courts, **trial courts are ordered to limit access to courtrooms and other spaces to no more than 10 persons, including staff, and to practice social distancing and limit court activity to only essential functions**, which include the following:

I. **CIRCUIT COURTS**

A. **Criminal Proceedings**

1. To the extent possible and consistent with MCR 6.006 and a defendant's constitutional and statutory rights, courts should conduct the following hearings remotely using two-way interactive video technology or other remote participation tools:
  - a. For in-custody criminal defendants, pleas, sentencings, arraignments on the information under MCR 6.113 (unless waived), probation violation arraignments under MCR 6.445(B), and emergency motions regarding bond. If the defendant is not in custody, these matters should be adjourned.
  - b. Processing of criminal extradition matters for in-custody defendants pursuant to MCL 780.9. The issue of bail should be addressed for those eligible defendants as provided in MCL 780.14.