

## **Media Advisory**

**For Immediate Release**

Date: March 13, 2020

From: Judge Frank R. Fuhr, Chief Judge, Illinois Fourteenth Judicial Circuit

Point of Contact: Victoria Bluedorn, Court Administrator

### **FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURTHOUSES REMAIN OPEN PRECAUTIONS BEING TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) is a highly communicable disease that has prompted the World Health Organization to declare it a pandemic, and the governor of Illinois to make a disaster proclamation. Fortunately there has not yet been a reported case in Rock Island, Whiteside, Henry or Mercer Counties. The courts will remain open until further notice. However, to combat the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of the citizens of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, the courts are taking the following precautionary steps:

1. Continued encouragement of judges, court staff, attorneys and litigants to practice proper health and safety habits and measures as recommended by the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention as well as our state and county health departments.
2. Significantly reducing the number of persons gathering at the courthouse by rescheduling many court hearings to a date after May 4, 2020, including all civil jury trials, arbitrations, non-emergency civil hearings/trials, and certain traffic and criminal cases. Attorneys and parties to litigation should check the status of their court dates through the link on their county website or directly at <http://judici.com>.
3. Encouraging attorneys and self-represented litigants to use the efile system to submit uncontested proposed orders that they might otherwise present in person to a judge at a courthouse.
4. Encouraging attorneys and self-represented litigants to request court hearings occur by telephone where permitted by law.
5. Requesting those called for jury duty to immediately contact their county jury coordinator if they are suffering from an illness - particularly fever, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, respiratory illness, or other flu-like symptoms. Or, if they have been in any of the countries or regions identified as Level 3 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention within the last 30 days. Those persons will have their jury service deferred. Similarly, litigants, attorneys, court staff, or court users who are ill, symptomatic or traveled to Level 3 countries or regions should not come onto the court premises. Further instructions can be located on your county's website.
6. Canceling all scheduled events at the courthouse until further notice including trainings and tours. Weddings and civil union ceremonies currently scheduled will take place as planned, but new ceremonies will be set on a date after June 1. Passport processing is suspended. If copies of court documents are needed, court users are directed to contact their circuit clerk's office or website on how they can do so via the U.S. Mail.

These precautionary measures taken to protect court users, court staff and citizens are subject to change in relation to developments regarding COVID-19.

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