

CHAMBERS OF  
**J. FRANK MCCARTNEY**  
CHIEF CIRCUIT JUDGE

**CIRCUIT COURT**  
EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
STATE OF ILLINOIS



ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
QUINCY, ILLINOIS 62301  
(217) 277-2055  
FAX (217) 277-2057  
OR  
PIKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
PITTSFIELD, ILLINOIS 62363  
(217) 285-2025  
FAX (217) 285-4961

**PRESS RELEASE FOR THE 8<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

Date: March 13, 2020

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Sharon Main  
Trial Court Administrator  
Tel: (217) 277-2055

The Eighth Judicial Circuit Court system 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 (CDC). As Chief Judge of the Eighth Judicial Circuit, I am requesting that non-essential in-person meetings, trainings, or other events scheduled throughout the Circuit be postponed until further advisories to the contrary are recommended. Where appropriate, I request that you take advantage of available technology and feel free to hold meetings, trainings or events via teleconference, videoconference, or other electronic means. Consistent with the CDC guidelines, I am recommending that high risk individuals avoid large gatherings and non-essential travel. Please employ in your respective counties a balanced and objective approach that considers both the uninterrupted administration of justice and the health and well-being of the judicial branch and its court patrons. I am directing out of an abundance of caution and to be proactive, that the following steps be taken to reduce the number of people entering the courthouse.

**Employees and Facilities:**

- 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.
- The Court's directive to its employees is that if you are sick, stay home. However, we realize that honoring this request may be difficult if the employee has limited sick time. I am asking the respective counties to formulate a policy if not already in existence that would soften the blow for employees affected by the coronavirus to prevent unwell employees from coming to work.
- I am requesting that facility crews conduct regular cleanings with an emphasis on first-touch areas such as doorknobs, doors, restrooms and courtrooms.

**Jury Service:**

- I am requesting that counties limit the number of jurors called for service. If possible, I am requesting that the State's Attorneys and defense attorneys continue cases set for jury that do not involve speedy trial issues and/or persons confined in jail.
- If you are summoned for jury service and are experiencing any acute respiratory

illness symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, headaches), flu-like symptoms, have a fever, or are coughing or sneezing, please contact the telephone number listed on the jury summons to discuss your situation. Attempts will be made to accommodate your situation.

#### Probation and Court Services:

Probation and Detention remain open.

I am requesting the following measures be taken as to the Probation Offices for at a minimum the next 30 days:

- Reduce non-essential, in-person appointments with clients, including home/community contacts
- Reduce non-essential urine testing and PBTs.
- Waive all non-essential court reviews.
- Eliminate non-essential meetings outside of the Courthouse.
- Eliminate DNA collection for non-emergency cases.
- Eliminate in-person appointments related only to public service work.
- Have no physical contact with clients, colleagues, etc. (handshakes, hugs, etc.).
- Reduce or eliminate probation-sponsored groups.
- Keep in frequent contact with treatment providers related to this topic and the needs of the clients.

#### State's Attorneys

- I am requesting that you continue to use your discretion on the issuance of summons to consider issuing summons at least 60 days out if possible.
- I am also requesting that you contact your law enforcement to have them consider using court dates whenever possible at least 60 days out on traffic tickets.

#### Litigants/Probationers:

If you have a case scheduled and begin to feel ill, you should consider the following:

- Contact the opposing party or attorney to explore an agreed continuance. If there is no agreement, contact the circuit clerk's office to advise if you are unable to attend court. Judges will consider on a case-by-case basis whether a continuance of the court date is in order. Providing medical documentation of your condition will likely help.
- 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.

#### Marriages:

- We will continue to perform marriages in the courthouse as needed. 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.
-

The current situation is one that presents challenges to the Court's normal operating procedures. We are looking at all the ways in which we might temporarily alter those procedures to minimize risk while still attending to the Court's core responsibilities. We appreciate the cooperation and patience of the public as we work to implement these changes in procedure.

---