

WHITESIDE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 2020-7

RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS

In light of the recent prohibition upon in-court proceedings attributable to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and in the interest of reducing the spread or reoccurrence of this virus by limiting the number of persons present in the courthouse, and in order to resume in-court proceedings in the most efficient and safest manner possible,

UNTIL FURTHER ORDER, in-person court operations in Whiteside County, Illinois shall resume as follows:

1. The IDHFS call shall resume August 1, 2020. No more than 10 cases may be scheduled at one time. Cases shall be set at the following intervals: on each hour and half hour from 9:00 a.m. through 11:30 a.m. Litigants and attorneys ONLY shall be allowed to attend. Litigants may NOT enter the courtroom until the time that their matter is scheduled. Court security shall have discretion to admit or restrict persons from entering the courtroom, being mindful of the need for separation and the minimization of persons in one court room at a given time. Participants may be required by court security to wear Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) at all times when in the courthouse.
2. All civil case management conferences will resume on August 3, 2020, as follows: If your case was set for May 4, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., it is now rescheduled to August 3, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. If your case was scheduled for May 6, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., your case is now scheduled for August 5, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. If your case was scheduled for May 8, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., it is now scheduled for August 7, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. This same rescheduling will occur in subsequent weeks, i.e., all case management conferences set for the second week in May will occur on the corresponding day of the week during the second week in August. The same process will occur for rescheduling matters in the remaining weeks of August and for each successive month, using the corresponding days and weeks (June conferences in September, July conferences in October). New cases will receive case management conference dates beginning in November, 2020. Clients are NOT to attend case management conferences at this time. Social distancing will likely still be in effect when court resumes and court security may limit the number of attorneys allowed in each courtroom at one time. Participants may be required by court security to wear PPE at all times.
3. Weddings will resume on August 7, 2020. Attendance at such weddings is limited to the couple being married and two other persons, who must observe social distancing measures and may be required by court security to wear PPE at all times.

4. All civil hearings scheduled on July 20, 2020, or thereafter shall occur as scheduled. All civil hearings which were to have occurred during the in-person court proceedings shutdown, which have not, or will not, occur by telephonic or videoconferencing hearings, pursuant to Administrative Order 2020-5, will need to be rescheduled by the parties, who may contact the clerk in order to schedule the same hearings for the same time increments before the same judge. If not rescheduled by July 1, 2020, those hearings will be converted to case management conferences and will be heard on a July 20, 2020 9:00 a.m. walk-in call.
5. All criminal, misdemeanor, and traffic matters; ordinance violations; and pay/appear dates continued indefinitely pursuant to prior administrative orders remain continued and will resume pursuant to a future order of the Court.

CONSISTENT WITH ORDERS FROM THE GOVERNOR AND DIRECTIVES FROM THE CHIEF JUDGE OF THIS CIRCUIT, FROM MAY 1, 2020 UNTIL FURTHER ORDER OF THE COURT, ALL PERSONS APPEARING IN THE COURTROOMS, INCLUDING COURTROOM PERSONNEL, SHALL WEAR AN APPROPRIATE MASK OR FACE COVERING AT ALL TIMES. THIS REQUIREMENT AFFECTS COURTROOM APPEARANCES ONLY. THE SHERIFF'S ORDERS GOVERN THE PPE, IF ANY, THAT PERSONS ENTERING AND REMAINING IN THE COURTHOUSE MUST WEAR.

PRIOR TO RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS, Attorneys are encouraged to submit agreed orders through the e-file system. Attorneys are free to schedule criminal case 402 Conferences and civil pretrial conferences with the court in order to establish temporary orders and/or to resolve cases. Such matters should be scheduled through the circuit clerk, unless otherwise directed by individual judges. Attorneys should utilize telephonic and videoconferencing hearings, in accordance with the law and pursuant to administrative orders and local rules.

This order will be modified in the future, based upon orders from the Governor, the Illinois Supreme Court, and the Chief Judge of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.

DATED: April 27, 2020



TRISH SENNEFF, Presiding Judge