

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
SALINE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

FILED

MAY 28 2020

STANDING ORDER FOR REMOTE HEARINGS
IN CIVIL CASES BEFORE JUDGE TODD LAMBERT

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
SALINE COUNTY, STATE OF ILLINOIS

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has infected hundreds of thousands of individuals in this country thus far, causing more than 100,000 deaths;

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor of the State of Illinois issued a disaster declaration for all counties in the state of Illinois. Thereafter, the Governor issued various Executive Orders closing schools and businesses (except essential businesses). Thereafter, the Governor issued his Restore Illinois plan, which contained a graduated program to re-open businesses and government facilities;

WHEREAS, the Illinois Supreme Court, in light of the disaster declaration and the Governor's Executive Orders, issued various Administrative Orders continuing all civil cases and certain criminal cases, as well as extending certain deadlines. The Supreme Court authorized the Chief Judge of each circuit to develop a plan regarding the rescheduling of cases in each circuit. The Chief Judge of the First Judicial Circuit authorized the presiding judge, and the judge assigned to each case, to determine guidelines for hearing cases in-person;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing, it is ordered and adjudged as follows:

1. Until further order of the Court, all divorce, family, adoption, law and any other civil cases handled by the undersigned judge, except small claims cases and LM, will be held virtually via the Zoom Cloud app.
2. All small claims and LM cases are continued until the Governor's Restore Illinois plan moves to Stage 4, which allows for gatherings of no more than 50 people.
3. Before the Court will hear cases remotely in which evidence and/or testimony will be submitted and solicited, a pre-trial hearing will be conducted to allow all parties to present any arguments against the use of remote hearing technology and arguments in favor of an in-person hearing.
4. ALL PERSONS APPEARING FOR IN-PERSON HEARINGS MUST WEAR A FACE MASK IN THE COURTROOM AT ALL TIMES.

5. All attorneys and parties who wish to participate in a remote hearing must register with Zoom and obtain a Zoom account or call in to the phone number provided. This is a free app which may be downloaded onto a computer, tablet or smart phone. If you do not have any of those devices you will be provided with a phone number to participate via phone. Persons without video capabilities may still participate in the meeting via phone.

6. Each party's attorney will receive notification of the Zoom ID code and password for each hearing. In order to attend the hearing via Zoom, the meeting ID and password must be used. Therefore, each party must stay in contact with his or her attorney and must keep his or her attorney, as well as the clerk, advised of a current residence address, email address and telephone number so that notices of hearings and Zoom meeting ID numbers and passwords can be properly provided.

7. Each person attending the hearing should insure that his or her name appears prominently in the Zoom account so that each person can be identified more easily and added to the hearing.

8. If possible, each person should use a wired internet connection. Most of the time a wireless connection will work, but fewer problems arise with the former rather than the latter.

9. Each person should appear by video if possible. There are many obstacles to using this communication platform for court purposes, but one of the primary concerns is identifying persons who speak so the court reporter can identify them correctly in the record. That task is easier if each person's face is visible.

10. Please test your video and audio **BEFORE** the hearing.

11. Please join the hearing early. Once the hearing starts it may be difficult to add participants to the hearing. Further, once the hearing has begun, I will lock the hearing. **IF YOU LEAVE THE HEARING YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED BACK IN** unless I am notified of your desire to re-enter and I grant that re-entry.

12. Pursuant to 720 ILCS 5/14-2, it is illegal for anyone to record a conversation unless all parties agree. I do not agree to be recorded before, during or after the hearing. The only official record of this hearing is that which is being made by the court reporter.

13. Everyone will be asked to introduce himself/herself at the beginning of the hearing.

14. Only authorized individuals (attorneys and parties) should attend the Zoom hearing.

15. Each person should mute the microphone on his/her Zoom app to eliminate background noise until it is his/her turn to speak.

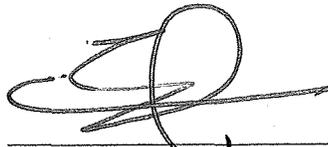
16. Now more than ever, only one person may talk at a time. Should you desire to speak during the hearing, please raise your hand so that you may be called on by the Court. Once called upon, please state your name each time you speak. If parties need to speak to their attorney during the proceeding a private Chat or Breakroom Session may be initiated by the court. The case will be recessed until the attorney and client are ready to proceed.

17. All remote hearings, except those which are confidential, will be simultaneously aired in the courtroom so that the public may have access to the Court's docket.

18. This Order may be amended or modified after the Court identifies best practices in conducting hearings during a pandemic.

SO ORDERED

ENTER: May 28, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TODD D. LAMBERT', written over a horizontal line.

TODD D. LAMBERT, JUDGE