

Frank R. Fuhr
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PRESS RELEASE
May 27, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Pandemic-related Administrative Orders – COVID-19 – Resumption of Court Hearings

As you know, we continue to operate under Pandemic-related Administrative Orders in the 14th Judicial Circuit which includes Rock Island County. The Illinois Supreme Court entered an Order allowing us to resume some court operations on June 1st with limitations. I have entered a new Circuit-wide Administrative Order to allow us to ease some of the restrictions currently in place on June 1, 2020. The post-June 1st, 2020 limitations include, but are not limited to, hourly case limitations per courtroom to keep the total courthouse population under control for the foreseeable future. That will be modified over time as the circumstances dictate.

Each Division in Rock Island County, via the Presiding Judges, will have their own specific policies and procedures to address each Division's needs with many Judges continuing to conduct remote hearings. As to Henry, Mercer and Whiteside counties, the Presiding Circuit Judges will have the authority to enact specific policies and procedures to address their individual courthouse and case needs. As an aside, most, if not all, circuits throughout the State of Illinois are also ramping up court operations on June 1st.

As we begin to expand the types of hearings we are conducting in the courthouse, I would ask you to keep in mind the following guidelines when scheduling and attending court hearings (these may be subject to change):

- Arrive no more than 10 minutes before the hearing and promptly leave after your hearing ends;
- Bring only your client to the hearing depending on the type of hearing;
- Wear a face covering while at the Rock Island County Justice Center;
- Maintain social distancing at all times within the Justice Center;
- Do not congregate inside or outside the courtroom;
- Limit the number of status hearings on a case or consider conducting them remotely;
- Limit negotiating on a case at the Justice Center – Judges may not allow extensive negotiations during hearings for everyone's safety;

- Do not have your client enter the well of the courtroom without first checking with the judge;
- You and your clients are encouraged to bring your own hand sanitizer and pen in the event supplies run short;
- Avoid touching handrails and other “high-touch” areas the best you can.

We have been assured that the building will be regularly sanitized for your health and welfare, but we also need your cooperation. Each courtroom will be limiting the number of hearings to ensure we do not have more than 10 people in the courtroom. Jury trials will have their separate policies and procedures. I would encourage you to continue conducting remote hearings whenever possible as allowed by the Judge presiding over your case.

Thank you for your continued patience, courtesy and cooperation. Stay safe.

With regards,



Chief Judge Frank R. Fuhr
14th Judicial Circuit of Illinois

FRF/sll

Frank R. Fuhr
Chief Circuit Judge

FRF/sll