

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

In re: MODIFICATION OF COURT OPERATIONS  
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Administrative Order  
No. 20-MS-024

The Court has been constantly monitoring developments on the Covid-19 pandemic, and has been working to preserve access to the Court while simultaneously protecting the health of Court staff and the constituencies we serve. Considering ongoing developments, including the Governor of Michigan's Executive Order 2020-21, entered today, the Western District of Michigan will be modifying its regular operations as described in this Administrative Order. This Administrative Order is effective as of the opening of regular business tomorrow, March 24, 2020, and remains in effect through the close of regular business on Monday, April 13, 2020.

1. Judicial Officers will continue to handle as many matters as possible by teleconference, video-conference or in some other way that does not require physical appearance in a court facility.
2. To the extent a Judicial Officer believes an in-person hearing is necessary and cannot be postponed or otherwise accommodated, the hearing will occur in the Gerald R. Ford Federal Building in Grand Rapids, Michigan (if in the Southern Division), or in the Court's Marquette facility (if in the Northern Division). The hearing will be conducted in a courtroom that has full audio and video capability so members of the public can observe proceedings, if they wish, by contacting the Court to arrange the connection, and so that there is a permanent record of proceedings.

3. The Court and the relevant Facility Security Committees have determined that it is necessary and appropriate to limit public access to the Ford Building and the Marquette facility, which are the only Court facilities that will be available for in-person hearings. Accordingly, the following access restrictions will apply during the term of this Administrative Order:
  - a. The Ford Building and the Marquette facility will be open on an appointment only basis during the term of this Administrative Order. A notice or order entered by the Court for a hearing is an appointment for those persons required at the hearing.
  - b. Any other appointment must be made and approved through the Designated Official for the relevant facility: namely, Clerk of Court, Tom Dorwin, for the Ford Building in Grand Rapids (616-456-2381); and Operations Supervisor, Nick Johnson, for the Marquette facility (906-226-2021). Appropriate reasons for an appointment include the need to file time critical papers that cannot be filed electronically.
  - c. Appointments will be made only for times between 10:00am and 2:00pm.
  - d. Interested members of the public who wish to observe a hearing will need to arrange with the Court for appropriate audio or video connection.
4. All other Court facilities in the District other than the Ford Building and the Marquette facility, will be closed to public access during the term of this Administrative Order. This includes the Court facilities in Kalamazoo and Lansing.

5. The Court considers all its personnel essential to meeting the core mission of the Judiciary. Much of their work can appropriately be performed without the need for physical presence in a Court facility, but to the extent they must come and go from Court facilities, they should be prepared to present a copy of this Administrative Order and their Federal Court ID to any police officer inquiring as to their business. The Court anticipates this will be sufficient to demonstrate they are operating consistent with the terms of the Governor's Order.
6. The Court remains open and accessible to litigants, as usual, through the normal CM-ECF process.

Dated: 3-23-2020

  
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ROBERT J. JONKER  
CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE