

PUBLIC NOTICE RE COVID-19

Updated March 23, 2020

1. The United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan is continuously monitoring information and advice from the Administrative Offices of US Courts, the Center for Disease Control, and public health officials. The District Court is fully engaged with agency partners, including Probation and Pre-Trial Services, the Bankruptcy Court, the General Services Administration, the United States Marshal Service, the Federal Public Defender and the United States Attorney's Office. The District Court is considering all options and making decisions based on what we are learning in real time. The District Court will regularly update decisions and related information on this website.
2. Each Judge continues to make case specific assessments regarding what can be postponed, or handled by phone, video-conference or in other ways short of in person hearings. The goal is to deliver justice without compromising health and safety. Recent experience with video-conferencing has been good, and the Court hopes to conduct as much business as possible using technology to avoid the need for in person appearances.
3. Some of the District Court's work—notably most criminal proceedings—typically require in person hearings. The District Court has statutory and constitutional obligations to keep those matters on track to the greatest extent possible. At the same time, the Court recognizes the growing risks and concerns created by in person hearings. The Court encourages motions from parties who believe postponement or other accommodation in such matters would be appropriate and in the best interests of the parties.
4. The District Court will continue to make liberal use of non-traditional work strategies, including staggering of work hours or telework (for example), to reduce the opportunity for virus transmission. In addition, flu season health protocols are being regularly discussed and vigorously enforced with staff. These include social distancing, hand washing and disinfection with sanitizers, regular cleaning of common touch points (doors, handles, keyboards, work surfaces), and requiring sick employees to stay home.
5. Consistent with the principles in its Continuing Operation Plan, the Court today entered an Administrative Order temporarily limiting public access to some of its facilities, and temporarily closing other facilities. The details are contained in the [Administrative Order](#). The Court believes this temporary operation will ensure necessary physical access to the Court and at the same time provide the best practicable protection to Court staff and persons using Court services. The Court will update notices at the entrance to its facilities accordingly.
6. The Court remains open and accessible to litigants, as usual, through the normal CM-ECF process. The Administrative Order simply imposes temporary limits on physical access to Court facilities.