

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
SIXTH AMENDED GENERAL ORDER 20-01**

August 14, 2020

IN RE: COVID-19 PUBLIC EMERGENCY

WHEREAS the Governor of the State of Illinois has declared a public health emergency in response to the spread of COVID-19 and has subsequently established a five-phased plan to reopen the State, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health authorities have advised public and private entities to take precautions to reduce the spread of the virus and set forth measures to avoid exposure. The United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois recognizes the need to take measures to effectuate these goals, while also continuing to fulfill its mission and keep both its civil and criminal court functions operating.

NOW THEREFORE, this Sixth Amended General Order 20-01 extends the directives issued in the Fifth Amended General Order 20-01 entered on July 17, 2020, until December 31, 2020. To protect the public health, reduce the size of public gatherings, and reduce any non-essential travel, the Court hereby adopts the following measures to effectuate these goals, effective immediately and until December 31, 2020, or further Order of the Court:

1. The federal courthouses in Peoria, Springfield, and Urbana will be open with regular business hours. Court operations in the Rock Island Division, temporarily relocated in Davenport, Iowa, will resume with regular business hours. Please note, although regular business hours will resume, our offices will only be staffed at 50 percent capacity.
2. All persons seeking entry to, or occupying any of the District's courthouses, must wear a face covering in the public areas of the courthouses and maintain six feet of physical distance from other persons whenever possible. The face covering must always completely conceal the wearer's nose and mouth. Individuals who provide medical documentation that they are unable to wear a face covering will be excepted from this requirement. Individuals are expected to read and follow all posted safety signage. Any person seeking entry to a courthouse who refuses to wear a face covering or removes their face covering in violation of this Order will be expelled from the courthouse. The presiding judge may excuse an individual from wearing a face covering when necessary for the effective administration of a proceeding.
3. Personnel working in a workspace that permits at least six feet of physical distance from other persons may temporarily remove the face covering.
4. Individuals without access to the Court's electronic filing system may submit filings for District Court and Bankruptcy Court via United States Mail to the relevant divisional mailing address or to a drop box located in each location. Payments by check or money order will also be accepted via United States Mail or the courthouse drop boxes. Cash payments must be made in the clerk's office.

5. General Order 20-02 dated March 26, 2020, allowing non-incarcerated pro se litigants the option to submit filings via email while complying with the terms of the Order shall remain in effect through December 31, 2020.
6. Jury trials may continue in all divisions beginning July 20, 2020. Jury trials will be conducted with safeguards the Court has enacted to maximize the health and safety of anyone participating in the proceedings. All participants are required to follow directions regarding the established safeguards. The public may attend trials in the courtroom galleries. The public is advised that due to space limitations and social distancing requirements, seating for the public may be limited. The presiding judge may provide a public viewing room inside the courthouse if space is available and doing so does not hinder the ability to conduct all scheduled proceedings in the courthouse safely.
7. In criminal proceedings:
 - a. In-person criminal plea and sentencing hearings may continue in all divisions beginning July 20, 2020; however, the Court will continue to utilize remote hearings in accordance with Amended General Order 20-03;
 - b. When reviewing a complaint or deciding whether to issue a warrant or summons, judges shall do so by reliable electronic means, rather than in person, pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 4.1; and
 - c. Motions to continue in-person criminal hearings shall be made by written motion no less than three (3) days prior to the scheduled hearing and setting forth in the body of the motion 1) whether the opposing party agrees to the continuance; 2) the reasons for the continuance; and 3) why the ends of justice outweigh the interests of the parties and the public in a speedy trial.
8. Naturalization ceremonies may resume with restrictions as determined by the presiding judge.
9. All Petty Offense (CVB) proceedings may resume at the discretion of the presiding judge.
10. All civil hearings, including settlement conferences, may be conducted in person if the presiding judge determines that conducting the hearing by telephone or video teleconference would be impractical.

In criminal cases, the Court finds that the time period of any continuance entered from the date of this Order through December 31, 2020, as a result of this Order shall be excluded under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), as the Court finds that the ends of justice served by taking that action outweigh the interests of the parties and the public in a speedy trial, given the need to protect the health and safety of defendants, their counsel, prosecutors, court staff, and the public by reducing the number of in-person hearings to the fullest extent possible.

Entered for the Court:

/s Sara Darrow

Hon. Sara Darrow
Chief United States District Judge