

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
PARISHES MOREHOUSE AND OUACHITA  
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

In Re:

COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE  
EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES  
CREATED BY COVID-19  
(CORONAVIRUS)

ORDER

This General Order is being issued in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Louisiana, and throughout the United States. In February of this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) issued “Interim Guidance” recommending that all entities consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-19, including the review of guidance from state and local health officials. In light of Governor Edwards’ declaration of a public health emergency and his executive order concerning public gatherings, as well as guidance from the Louisiana Supreme Court, the Fourth Judicial District Court, in and for the Parishes of Morehouse and Ouachita, issues this order. Our purpose is to address this public health crisis in a way that protects the health and safety of the public and of everyone at our Court facilities, while at the same time, to the extent possible, maintains access to the Court.

Given the risk posed to the public, and in consideration of the public health recommendations, it is hereby ORDERED that, effective beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, 8:00 a.m. through Friday, April 10, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.:

- 1) All jury trials, both civil and criminal, are hereby continued, to be re-set by Order;
- 2) All grand jury proceedings in this District are hereby continued, to be re-convened by Order;
- 3) All criminal trials, hearings, and court appearances are hereby continued, to be reset by order, except for initial appearances (72 hour hearings), arraignments for incarcerated persons only and bond hearings;

- 4) The delays in all criminal cases created by this Order shall constitute 'just cause', pursuant to La. Code of Criminal Procedure art. 701;
- 5) All Civil trials, hearings, and court appearances are hereby continued, to be reset by order, except for hearings related to the following: civil protective orders, emergency child custody matters pursuant to La. Code of Civil Procedure art. 3945, emergency interdictions, and matters of public health related to this crisis;
- 6) All Non-support matters are hereby continued, to be reset by order;
- 7) All Juvenile, Drug Court and DWI court matters will be addressed in a separate Order;
- 8) The Court orders the attached Appendix 'A' be posted where it is easily visible at all public entrances to the Courthouses. Anyone attempting to enter the Courthouses in violation of the protocols contained therein will be denied entry by a Court Security Officer and may be subject to punishment for contempt of court;
- 9) This Order does not affect the Court's ability to consider civil or criminal matters that can be resolved without hearing.

The Morehouse and Ouachita Parish Courthouses remain open during regular business hours. The public may continue to utilize Court services in accordance with this Order and while following all applicable public health guidelines. The public is encouraged to check the website for the Fourth Judicial District Court for additional information and updates ([www.4jdc.com](http://www.4jdc.com)).

This Order remains in effect until 5:00 p.m. on April 10, 2020, or until further orders of this Court.

Dated this 13 day of March, 2020.

  
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DANIEL J. ELLENDER, CHIEF JUDGE  
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JUDGE ALVIN R. SHARP  
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JUDGE SHARON MARCHMAN  
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JUDGE WENDELL MANNING  
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JUDGE H. STEPHENS WINTERS  
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JUDGE B. SCOTT LEEHY  
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JUDGE WILSON RAMBO  
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JUDGE FREDERIC C. AMMAN III  
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JUDGE ROBERT C. JOHNSON  
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JUDGE LARRY D. JEFFERSON  
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JUDGE MARCUS L. HUNTER

# Appendix A

By Order of the Court, the following persons  
**SHALL NOT ENTER THE COURTHOUSE:**

- Persons who have been in any of the following countries within the last 14 days:

CHINA, SOUTH KOREA, JAPAN, ITALY, IRAN

(This list may be updated as further guidance is received.)

- Persons who reside or have had close contact with someone who has been in one of the countries listed above within the last 14 days
- Persons who have been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital or health agency;
- Persons who have been diagnosed with, or have had contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Persons exhibiting symptoms unusual to you that are among the CDC-identified symptoms (these have been identified as fever, cough, or shortness of breath)

**Anyone attempting to enter in violation of these protocols will be denied entry by a Court Security Officer and may be subject to contempt of court.**

If you have a scheduled hearing, appointment or you are otherwise required to appear at this courthouse, and you are unable to appear because of the restrictions listed above, contact the following:

- If you are represented by an attorney, or have been subpoenaed by an attorney, please contact the attorney;
- If you are an attorney or a pro se party, and you are scheduled to appear in court on a civil proceeding, please contact the chambers of that judge directly. If you are an attorney or a pro se party, and you are scheduled to appear in court for a criminal proceeding, please contact the District Attorneys office; Morehouse - 318-281-4907; Ouachita – 318-388-4720
- If you are scheduled to meet with a Probation Department Officer, please contact the appropriate officer;
- If you are a juror, please contact Jury Administration
- For the Clerk of Court, Tax Assessor, Police Jury or Civil Sheriff matters, please contact those agencies.

For any matters not listed here, please call your agency whom you are here to see.

These restrictions will remain in place temporarily until it is determined to be safe to remove them. People who think they have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.