

STATE OF LOUISIANA \*\* FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
PARISHES OF OUACHITA AND MOREHOUSE

In re:

PROCEEDINGS IN CRIMINAL  
CASES CONDUCTED BY PHONE  
OR AUDIO-VISUAL MEANS

EN BANC 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 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, including the Louisiana Supreme Court's Order dated March 16, 2020, the Fourth Judicial District Court, in and for the Parishes of Morehouse and Ouachita, issued an order dated March 13, 2020. The purpose of said Order 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, maintaining access to the Court.

The undersigned judges further recognize that many years ago, the judges of the Fourth Judicial District Court, sitting *en banc*, authorized the use of audio-visual equipment for initial appearances (also known as 72-hour hearings) and arraignments in Ouachita Parish, where such capabilities existed. However, in Morehouse Parish such capabilities have not existed up to this date.

Given the exigent nature of the present circumstances as stated above, recognizing the necessity to minimize transport of incarcerated criminal defendants, and being mindful of the need for criminal defendants to appear before the Court as soon as can practicably be done, the undersigned judges of the Fourth Judicial District Court, in and for the Parishes of Morehouse and Ouachita, sitting *en banc*, issue the following Order:

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that the Court authorizes, to the fullest extent allowed by law, the appearance of incarcerated criminal defendants by telephone or audio-visual electronic equipment in court proceeding on the record, cognizant of the law permitting such appearances for the following:

- (a) initial appearances (also known as 72-hour hearings) and initial setting of bail (C.Cr.P. art. 230.1 and C.Cr.P. art. 522);
- (b) arraignments (C.Cr.P. art. 551);
- (c) any pretrial motion or hearing on pretrial motions (C.Cr.P. art. 522);
- (d) pleas of guilty (including those requiring Boykin hearings), with the defendant's consent (C.Cr.P. art. 553 and C.Cr.P. art. 562);
- (e) any probation revocation hearing, including any hearing for a contempt of court (C.Cr.P. art. 562);
- (f) any post-conviction proceeding (C.Cr.P. art. 930.9);
- (g) any juvenile proceeding to the extent allowed by law; and

(h) any other proceeding where specifically allowed by the Code of Criminal Procedure relative to simultaneous audio-visual transmission.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the provisions herein apply to both Morehouse and Ouachita Parishes to the extent technology is in place to support these provisions.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the provisions herein are effective immediately, given the exigent circumstances, and this Court will formally amend its Appendices to the Louisiana District Court Rules at a later date as soon as can practicably be done.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

THUS DONE AND SIGNED in Monroe, Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, this 18 day of March, 2020.

  
DANIEL J. ELLENDER, CHIEF JUDGE

  
JUDGE ALVIN R. SHARP

  
JUDGE SHARON MARCHMAN

  
JUDGE WENDELL MANNING


  
JUDGE H. STEPHENS WINTERS

  
JUDGE B. SCOTT LEEHY

  
JUDGE WILSON RAMBO

  
JUDGE FREDERIC C. AMMAN III

  
JUDGE ROBERT C. JOHNSON

  
JUDGE LARRY D. JEFFERSON

  
JUDGE MARCUS L. HUNTER

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
PARISHES OF MOREHOUSE AND OUACHITA  
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

IN RE:

FILED: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
DEPUTY CLERK OF COURT

ORDER

Acting under the authority of Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution of 1974, the order of the Louisiana Supreme Court dated March 16, 2020, the order of the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court dated March 13, 2020 and the inherent power of this Court, and considering the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Louisiana, Governor John Bel Edwards' declaration of a public health emergency in Proclamation Number 25 JBE 2020 and additional measures in Proclamation Number 30 JBE 2020, and President Donald Trump's declaration of a national emergency on March 13, 2020, and in consideration of public health recommendations to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus and slowing the spread of the disease while balancing the need to maintain access to Louisiana courts,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT effective March 16, 2020, 8:00 a.m. through April 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., the following orders apply to all specialty courts of the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, excepting Reentry Court:

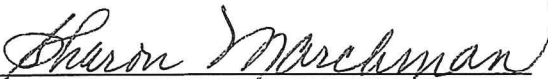
That all specialty courts including, Juvenile Court (Delinquency, CINC, and TPR matters), Juvenile Drug Court, Adult Drug and DWI Court, Adoptions, and Judicial Commitments will remain open on a limited basis during this pandemic for court settings restricted to matters pertaining to detained persons, continued custody hearings, initial appearances, emergency cases, and time-sensitive matters, with all other matters being reset by order;

Following the most recent recommendations from the CDC, the goal of this Court is to reduce the number of people in a space at the same time in order to reduce people's exposure to COVID-19 and the Court will take appropriate action to accomplish this goal;

That the Court will expand, to the extent possible by law and local rule, the use of audio and/or video conferencing, to include holding detention, continued custody hearings for

delinquency and child in need of care cases, emergency cases, scheduling conferences and meetings, and bail settings;

THUS DONE AND SIGNED in Monroe, Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, on this the 18<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.

  
JUDGE SHARON I. MARCHMAN  
DIVISION B  
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
PARISHES OF MOREHOUSE AND OUACHITA  
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

In Re:

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

SUPPLEMENTAL COVID-19 ORDER - 1

The Court issued an Order, dated March 13, 2020, in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Louisiana, and throughout the United States. Since that Order, the Louisiana Supreme Court issued its own Order dealing with this crisis, dated March 16, 2020; and Governor Edwards issued a proclamation concerning the suspension of legal delays on March 16, 2020. Considering the rapidly changing circumstances surrounding this public health crisis, and to provide clarity to this Court's March 13, 2020 Order, the Court issues the following Supplement to that Order:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED the March 13, 2020, Order of the Court remains in full force and effect;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED:

- 1) Civil Order Signing in Ouachita Parish will be limited to 8:30-9:30, Monday through Friday. Civil Order signing in Morehouse Parish will be limited to 8:30-9:30, Monday and Thursday;
- 2) There will be no Motion Hour;
- 3) Civil Protective Order Court will maintain its current schedule; however, the number of people in a space at the same time will be reduced in order to minimize contact and the Court will take whatever appropriate action is necessary to accomplish the goal of social distancing;
- 4) Any emergency child custody matters pursuant to La. Code of Civil Procedure art. 3945, emergency interdictions, and matters of public health related to this crisis, shall be presented to the randomly assigned

civil section of this Court. The party filing such a matter shall first contact the assigned Judge's chambers directly to facilitate the presentation of such a request to the assigned Judge;

- 5) The Appendix 'A' attached to the March 13, 2020, Order is amended as set forth in the attachment to this Supplemental Order.


The Morehouse and Ouachita Parish Courthouses continue to remain open during regular business hours. Neither this Order, nor the March 13, 2020, Order effect the operations of the other Offices or Agencies contained within the Courthouses. 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 18 day of March, 2020.

  
DANIEL J. ELLENDER, CHIEF JUDGE

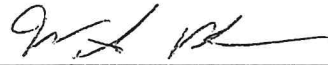
  
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JUDGE WENDELL MANNING

  
JUDGE H. STEPHENS WINTERS

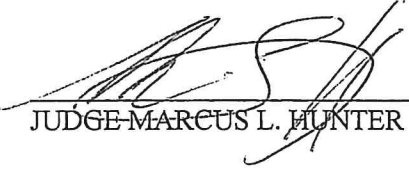
  
JUDGE B. SCOTT LEEHY

  
JUDGE WILSON RAMBO

  
JUDGE FREDERIC C. AMMAN III

  
JUDGE ROBERT C. JOHNSON

  
JUDGE LARRY D. JEFFERSON

  
JUDGE MARCUS L. HUNTER

## Appendix 'A'

### **THE COURTHOUSE REMAINS OPEN**

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, ANY  
EUROPEAN COUNTRY  
(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 close contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Persons exhibiting symptoms unusual to you that are among the CDC-identified symptoms of COVID-19 (these have been identified as fever, excessive 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 punishment for 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.