

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
STATE OF LOUISIANA  
PARISHES OF EAST CARROLL, MADISON AND TENSAS

COURT OPERATIONS

ORDER 2020-06

Acting in accordance with the Louisiana Supreme Court Order dated May 15, 2020, Governor Jon Bel Edward's renewal of the State of Emergency for COVID-19 and extension and modification of emergency provisions in Proclamation Numbers 58 JBE 2020 and 59 JBE 2020 and in consideration of ongoing public health recommendations to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus and slowing the spread of the disease while balancing the need to protect the constitutional rights and public safety of the citizens of this state and the Sixth Judicial District by maintaining access to Louisiana courts,

IT IS HEREBY ORDER THAT:

1. **PRIOR ORDERS:** All prior orders of this court will remain in place except as expressly modified herein.
2. **IN PERSON PROCEEDINGS:** The prohibition on conducting in-person proceedings is hereby lifted, and this Court is authorized to conduct in-person proceedings on all matters. This authority does not extend to any matters suspended by executive action by the Governor, including but not limited to evictions. This court must continue to take measures to limit access to courtrooms and other spaces, with minimum physical contact, to practice social distancing and limit in-person court capacity to 25% of the total capacity, as determined by the State Fire Marshall, counting both the number of employees and members of the public present in the building at one time. As this situation is constantly changing, this Court is instructed to follow all guidelines issued by the Center for Disease Control, the President and the Governor, and to further limit access to courtroom and other spaces to the maximum number of people set forth in any future guideline or official proclamation that may be issued. All matters should continue to be conducted with the use of video and telephone conferencing whenever possible.
3. **OFFICES IN THE COURTHOUSE:** The courthouses for the parishes of East Carroll, Madison and Tensas will open to the public on June 1, 2020. Normal business hours from of 8:30 to 4:30, Monday through Friday will be observed. Persons having business with any of the offices in the courthouse should contact that office directly as access to some offices is by appointment only.
4. **SPEEDY TRIAL COMPUTATIONS:** Given the public health concerns and the necessity of taking action to slow the spread of the disease, the continuances occasioned by this Order serve the ends of justice and outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial. Therefore, the time periods of such continuance shall be excluded from speedy trial computations pursuant to law, including but not limited to those set forth in the Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure and the Louisiana Children's Code, and presumptively constitute just cause.
5. **JURY TRIALS:** No Civil or Criminal jury trial shall commence before June 30, 2020.
6. **CRIMINAL MATTERS:** All non-incarcerated individuals with criminal matters scheduled from June 1, 2020 forward shall appear on their scheduled court date and at the scheduled time unless notified otherwise by the District Attorney's Office. Only individuals and their attorneys shall appear; no additional individuals. Children will not be allowed in the courtroom unless expressly permitted by the judge. Any party that has caused a witness to be subpoenaed to court should arrange, with the bailiff, for the witness to remain outside of the Courtroom or courthouse on standby so they may be contacted when needed to testify.

In addition, Adult Criminal 72-hour hearings, bond reductions and any matter permitted by the Code of Criminal Procedure Article 562 involving incarcerated individuals will be conducted virtually through Zoom. This Court may also conduct

Gwen's Law Hearings via Zoom, if deemed necessary. All in-person appearances by incarcerated individuals must be approved by the Judge.

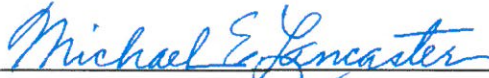
7. **CIVIL MATTERS:** Civil hearings may be conducted virtually, at the discretion of the judge, unless good cause exists to appear in-person. In circumstances where video scheduling is not possible and/or a video hearing has not been scheduled, civil in-person hearings will be conducted one at a time, so individuals should be prepared to wait outside the courtroom at a location designated by the bailiff, until the case is called. Only the party and his attorney should appear in person at the hearing. Any party that has caused a witness to be subpoenaed to Court should arrange, with the bailiff, for the witness to remain outside of the Courtroom on standby so they may be contacted when needed to testify. Any civil matters involving incarcerated individuals must be conducted virtually using Zoom. Children will not be allowed at civil hearings unless expressly authorized by the judge.

8. **JUVENILE AND NON-SUPPORT MATTERS:** Child in Need of Care proceedings will continue to be conducted virtually via Zoom, when feasible and at the discretion of the Judge.

All persons noticed to appear in other juvenile and non-support matters, must appear in-person unless instructed otherwise. All juvenile matters, excluding non-support, will be conducted one case at a time similarly to civil matters and all non-support matters to be conducted similarly to criminal matters.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the foregoing order shall remain in place until it is otherwise modified or dissolved by subsequent order.

THUS, DONE AND SIGNED at Tallulah, Louisiana, this 29<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.



HON. MICHAEL E. LANCASTER  
CHIEF JUDGE, DIVISION A



HON. LAURIE R. BRISTER  
JUDGE, DIVISION B

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
PARISHES OF EAST CARROLL, MADISON AND TENSAS  
SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

IN RE: STANDING ORDER FOR  
IN-COURT PROTOCOLS DURING  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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

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


IN-COURT PROTOCOLS  
STANDING ORDER

The court, mindful of the need to protect court staff and members of the public from unnecessary risk of exposure during the COVID-19 outbreak, issues the following standing order concerning the conduct of In-Court proceedings:

**IT IS ORDERED** that the following protocols are adopted:

1. The public will enter the courthouse at the entrance designated by each sheriff of his particular parish. All court personnel will enter by a separate entrance.
2. All persons entering the courtroom will have their temperature taken by the bailiff and will be asked the following questions:
  - a. Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have not fully recovered?
  - b. Have you been in contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days or have you been advised by a physician to self-quarantine?
  - c. Are you suffering from a fever, cough or shortness of breath?
  - d. Are you awaiting a COVID-19 test result?
3. Individuals who are running a fever or who answer "Yes" to any of the above questions, will not be permitted to enter the courthouse.
4. All persons entering the courthouse and the courtroom shall wear a mask or face covering which covers the nose and mouth. Masks will be provided to those who do not have a mask, while supplies last.
5. Hand sanitizers will be provided at the main entrance to the courthouse as well as in the courtroom.
6. Bailiffs along with District Attorney Investigators will designate areas for those waiting to get into court and will assist in monitoring those areas.
7. Persons who are of the general public shall not come past the bar into the counsel table area. These individuals must speak from the microphone at the podium provided.
8. All court personnel including attorneys must arrive to court by 9:00 a.m.
9. Attorneys are encouraged to refrain from moving around the courtroom as little as possible and are further encouraged to speak from the designated microphone at the counsel table.
10. To the extent feasible/possible, the maximum number of persons in all proceedings will be limited at any one time to ensure proper physical distancing.
11. Court dockets are to be staggered in such a way as to promote physical distancing.
12. The Court will take recesses as necessary to ensure that the attorneys are able to communicate with their clients and investigators.

**THUS DONE AND SIGNED** in Tallulah, Louisiana, this 29<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

  
HON. MICHAEL E. LANCASTER  
CHIEF JUDGE, DIVISION A

  
HON. LAURIE R. BRISTER  
JUDGE, DIVISION B