

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF ST. LOUIS
COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CLAYTON, MISSOURI**

In Re: COVID-19

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 13

ORDER

WHEREAS, the existence and spread of the COVID-19 has resulted in the declaration of a worldwide pandemic; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to take steps to protect the health and safety of all employees of the 21ST Judicial Circuit, all judicial officers and all attorneys and parties who have court hearings or other business in this Judicial Circuit while also balancing the rights of all said individuals and parties to litigation; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate and necessary to take quick action to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 and to reduce the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the unprecedented circumstances existing at this time warrant this administrative action; and

WHEREAS, countless governmental entities and private businesses have implemented numerous immediate actions and modifications to their normal course of business; and

WHEREAS, St. Louis County Executive Sam Page has declared a State of Emergency to allow St. Louis County, Missouri, to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 and promote the health and safety of St. Louis County residents; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus spreads between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; and

WHEREAS, a large gathering of individuals without necessary mitigation for the spread of infection may pose a risk of the spread of infectious disease; and

WHEREAS, the Court desires to employ all reasonable and prudent measures to help protect the general public, litigants, lawyers, and employees from the spread of COVID-19 creating this emergency;

WHEREAS, the Presiding Judge of the 21st Judicial Circuit has the authority over dockets of this Circuit, including all St. Louis County Municipal Courts, to enter Orders affecting the general scheduling of cases in this Circuit.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, effective Monday, March 16, 2020 and continuing through Friday, March 27, 2020, that **the St. Louis County Circuit Court will remain open with the following modifications to its operations:**

1. The Judicial Administrator is Ordered and authorized to suspend the impaneling of all jurors for the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020. All jury trials scheduled for the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020 are hereby continued and will be rescheduled to a later date. Prospective jurors are referred to the St. Louis County website, www.stlcourtcourts.com, for further information;

2. In all criminal cases, as well as probation revocation matters, where the defendant is confined in the St. Louis County Justice Center or otherwise in custody at any other jail or at any other prison, said defendants shall not be personally transported to or brought into court for any hearing. All hearings regarding any such defendants shall be conducted via videoconferencing, including initial appearances, bond reviews and arraignment hearings. Judicial officers have the discretion to allow attorneys to appear by telephone if appropriate and cancel/continue hearings as appropriate and consistent with this Administrative Order. Victims have the statutory right to participate in hearings – that right is not changed by this Administrative Order. However, the Prosecutor Attorney’s Office is encouraged to identify alternative methods for victims to participate in any hearings;

All criminal cases where the defendant is not in custody shall be postponed and rescheduled;

Probation officers shall not appear in person for probation revocation proceedings unless requested by the appropriate judge;

3. All large volume, high volume and/or multi-case dockets, including but not limited to Associate Circuit Court high volume civil dockets, Circuit Court civil case management dockets, Associate and Circuit Court domestic “call” dockets, landlord/tenant dockets/cases, small claims dockets/cases, uncontested dissolution dockets/cases, traffic and municipal dockets/cases, and treatment court dockets including the SAFETI Family Drug Court, shall be postponed and rescheduled;

4. Pursuant to Sections 455.040 R.S.Mo. and 455.516 R.S.Mo., for good cause as demonstrated in this Administrative Order, all full order of protection hearings scheduled for the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020 will be continued and rescheduled. All *Ex Parte* Orders of Protection currently in effect are hereby extended for good cause shown by operation of this Administrative Order until the new hearing date;

5. Regarding hearings scheduled in the Juvenile Division of the St. Louis County Family Court, all detention hearings and protective custody hearings will proceed as scheduled. Hearings for juveniles held in judicial custody within the St. Louis County Juvenile Detention Center shall be held. All other hearings in abuse and neglect cases may be continued for good cause. All other delinquency cases and termination of parental rights cases which are scheduled during the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020 will be continued and rescheduled;

6. Probate cases involving 96-hour and 21-day mental health involuntary detentions and emergency guardianships will be heard as scheduled;
7. Each judicial officer and his/her division staff, along with the staff of any supporting department, shall be responsible for notifying all parties and counsel if their cases/dockets will be postponed, and shall be responsible for rescheduling new hearing dates. If the cases/dockets are **not** being postponed/continued, the court will also notify all parties and counsel of any special arrangements, such as videoconferencing;
8. Unless otherwise indicated above, individual hearings on specific criminal, civil, domestic, juvenile and probate cases will be postponed and rescheduled unless a specific judge assigned to that case notifies the parties that the hearing will proceed as scheduled, pursuant to this Administrative Order. Judicial officers are strongly encouraged to conduct such hearings via videoconferencing or telephone, if possible. Additionally, judicial officers are strongly encouraged to address such hearings consistent with this Administrative Order and guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
9. All Municipal Courts supervised by the Presiding Judge of the 21st Judicial Circuit are subject to this Administrative Order. All Municipal Court proceedings are suspended, consistent with this Administrative Order and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. This order does not pertain to other municipal functions that are governed separately by the municipalities in which they are located;
10. The Family Exchange Center and parent visits supervised by the Family Court, shall remain in operation, but hours may be reduced, subject to staffing limitations;
11. The Adult Abuse Office will continue its normal operations;
12. All Alternative Treatment Court participants shall appear as determined by their supervising probation officers;
13. All non-essential court-related activities, such as weddings, tours, meetings with outside groups, after-hours classes, social activities and events will be postponed and rescheduled;
14. The Public Resource Center and Law Library will be closed to the public;
15. Judicial officers shall have the discretion to exclude any individuals from their courtrooms, in order to comply with the recommendations of the CDC;
16. All nonessential court-related travel for staff and judicial officers is canceled through the end of March 2020;
17. This Administrative Order only applies to matters scheduled during the weeks of March 16, 2020 and March 23, 2020. Additional Administrative Orders will address matters scheduled for the weeks that follow.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

March 13, 2020

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael D. Burton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the text.

Michael D. Burton

Presiding Judge

St. Louis County Circuit Court