

17th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

EUGENE G. DOHERTY
CHIEF JUDGE



WINNEBAGO COUNTY COURTHOUSE
400 WEST STATE STREET - ROOM 215
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61101
PHONE 815-319-4800

PRESS RELEASE

Date: March 17, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COURT FORMALIZES ACTIVITY REDUCTION MEASURES
THROUGH APRIL 20, 2020**

Having yesterday announced the cancellation of civil and family cases and an ordered slowdown of criminal and juvenile cases, 17th Circuit Chief Judge Eugene Doherty today issued formal orders for both measures effective until April 20, 2020.

The two orders provide as follows:

- With the exception of orders of protection and stalking/no contact orders, all civil and family court hearings prior to April 20, 2020, are cancelled. The court retains the ability to entertain emergency matters.
- Criminal and juvenile courtrooms will be reduced to essential, time-sensitive matters until April 20, 2020; the process of identifying those case will be managed individually in each courtroom in an orderly manner.

“These measures comply with the recommendations of health professionals,” Chief Judge Doherty said. “We have approached our civil and family cases with a broad cancellation approach, while utilizing a more careful, case-specific approach on criminal and juvenile matters to satisfy our legal and constitutional obligations.”

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STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF BOONE
COUNTY OF WINNEBAGO

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-8
TEMPORARY ORDER - COVID-19 Procedures Civil Division and Family Division

The following procedures are being implemented in connection with all Winnebago and Boone County civil cases and family cases (but excluding orders of protection and stalking/no contact orders):

- A. **All court dates currently set between March 17 and April 20, 2020, are canceled and will be continued to a date falling after May 17, 2020** (not including orders of protection and stalking/no contact orders). This includes all dates currently scheduled for status, first return, argument, hearing, decision, bench trial or jury trial. All cases will eventually be given a new date for status, and parties will be notified by mail.
- B. **Emergency Matters:** Matters involving exigent circumstances may be set on a date less than 60 days out with court approval. To request an emergency hearing, an attorney shall email the assigned judge, including all counsel in the email chain. The assigned judge will determine if the matter qualifies as an emergency and set the matter accordingly via the email chain.
- C. **Agreed settings for argument, motion, etc.:** For matters which are already positioned for argument or decision at a non-evidentiary hearing, the parties may *mutually* request such a hearing from the judge presiding in that matter. The presiding judge will decide whether granting a hearing is appropriate.
- D. **Mode of hearing:** It is the Court's preference that parties appear via CourtCall or other telephonic means for any such hearing (and will likely require it for any non-emergency matter). Those personally appearing for any hearing as discussed above are required to remain seated at counsel table or behind available lecterns with safe distances (6-10 feet) between themselves and any other persons in the courtroom. While parties have a right to be present whenever a case is called, during the COVID-19 crisis counsel should *strongly discourage* clients from attending hearings unless their presence is essential to the hearing.
- E. **Self-represented litigants** shall continue to file motions with the Circuit Clerk's office. All requests for an emergency hearing shall be in writing and clearly labeled as "emergency", and will be forwarded by the Circuit Clerk to the presiding judge for ruling or scheduling.
- F. **Individual civil division and family division judges** may issue orders that direct attorneys and litigants how to submit agreed orders, etc.

This order remains in effect until further order of the court. To give flexibility for extension of this order if necessary, matters will be rescheduled to dates falling after May 17, 2020. The court will continue to review and adjust this order as is necessary.

ENTER: _____


Eugene G. Doherty, Chief Judge

DATED: _____

3/17/20

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF BOONE
COUNTY OF WINNEBAGO

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-9
TEMPORARY ORDER - COVID-19 Procedures Criminal Division and Juvenile Division

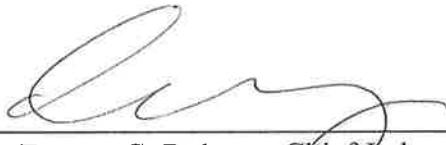
Effective immediately until April 20, 2020, the following procedures are being implemented in connection with all Winnebago and Boone County criminal cases and juvenile cases:

- A. In light of the COVID-19 virus concerns, and in conformity with recommendations of public health professionals, Criminal and Juvenile Courts will be restricting their activity to only essential and time-sensitive matters. This order is in effect until April 20, 2020, unless otherwise extended.

- B. The draw-down of criminal and juvenile court dates will be managed individually by the judge in each courtroom. Defendants' presence will be readily excused in proceedings until April 20, 2020. Attorneys and litigants are encouraged to work with each other and the judge presiding in the applicable courtroom to continue all non-essential matters to a date falling after May 17, 2020, the latter date being chosen to give the court maximum flexibility in the event this order must be extended.

This order remains in effect until further order of the court. The court will continue to review and adjust this order as is necessary.

ENTER: _____


Eugene G. Doherty, Chief Judge

DATED: _____

3/17/20