

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**COUNTY OF MECKLENBURG**

**IN RE:**

**OFFENSE EXPANSION AND  
CRIMINAL CASE INITIATION**

**IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE**

**JUDICIAL DISTRICT 26**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

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THIS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER has been entered to ensure the fair and proper administration of justice and to implement business practices in the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District that initiate criminal cases in a manner that is consistent with those of a majority of trial court districts across North Carolina and promotes more effective and efficient court administration. The undersigned Senior Resident Superior Court Judge and Chief District Court Judge enter this Administrative Order pursuant to the inherent authority of the court and pursuant to its administrative supervision and authority over the operation of the Superior and District Courts in the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 7A-41.1, 7A-146.

Whereas, offense expansion is part of the North Carolina eCourts initiative; and

Whereas, offense expansion is defined as the practice of listing all offenses charged against an individual defendant arising from the same incident under a single case for purposes of criminal case management; and

Whereas, an incident is defined as an event to which the initiating law enforcement agency has assigned a unique report number; and

Whereas, offense expansion was first initiated in February of 2021 with the launch of Brazos, an electronic citation platform, and officers have since generated infraction and criminal cases listing multiple offenses per case by incident; and

Whereas, implementation of offense expansion facilitates compliance with the requirements of State v. Rieger in the assessment of legal financial obligations, and

Whereas, the Conference of Chief District Court Judges has adopted rules requiring offense expansion when possible; and

Whereas, continuing the practice of defining each case by single offense creates additional, unnecessary and onerous data entry burdens for judicial users by duplicating court dates, dispositions, relation of cases, among many other case management tasks; and

Whereas, the practice of initiating a single case by offense rather than incident requires law enforcement officers and magistrates to enter the same data multiple times and leads to data entry errors; and

Whereas, the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts implemented eWarrants, a new criminal case repository, on July 22, 2022, resulting in substantial changes in the initiation of criminal process and resulting in delays in case initiation, probable cause hearings and initial appearances; and

Whereas, immediate implementation of offense expansion will substantially reduce the time spent by law enforcement officers and magistrates initiating and issuing criminal process; and

Whereas, it is the policy of the District Attorney for the 26<sup>th</sup> Prosecutorial District to effectuate offense expansion, including at the time of indictment, for cases filed on or after the date this order goes into effect; and

Whereas, implementation of electronic case management platforms as part of the North Carolina eCourts Odyssey Integrated Case Management System will provide the capacity for the listing of an unlimited number of charges per case; and

Whereas, the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has been assigned to Track 2 for launch of the statewide eCourts Odyssey Integrated Case Management System and is scheduled for implementation in the first quarter of 2023; and

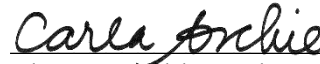
Whereas, the adoption of business rules and practices to implement offense expansion in the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District will facilitate the successful transition to the eCourts Odyssey Integrated Case Management System; and

Whereas, differing business rules amongst the judicial districts for the definition of a case contribute to erroneous assessments of court performance and inaccurate evaluation of court performance measures;

WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that effective October 3, 2022:

1. All cases initiated by law enforcement officers shall be initiated in Brazos or eWarrants; and
2. All law enforcement officers using Brazos or eWarrants shall list all offenses arising from a single incident charged against an individual on a single criminal process; and
3. All criminal process initiated or issued by a magistrate of the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District shall list all offenses arising from a single incident charged against an individual on a single criminal process and under a single criminal case number; and
4. The number of offenses arising from a single incident to be listed on each criminal process shall be equal to the capacity of the system in which the process is required to be initiated.

Entered this the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2022



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The Honorable Carla N. Archie  
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge



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The Honorable Elizabeth T. Trosch  
Chief District Court Judge