

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
DISTRICT COURT DIVISION

ADMIN ORDER 20AO67

**DIRECTIVES FOR OPERATION OF DISTRICT COURTS**

The Chief District Court Judge for Judicial District Six enters this Administrative Order in response to the Emergency Order of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Cheri Beasley and the direction of the NCAOC Director McKinley Wooten, Jr. It appearing to the Court that catastrophic conditions resulting from the public health threat posed by COVID-19 exist in Northampton County, North Carolina; therefore, District Court is postponed for non-essential, in-person court proceedings for 30 days, beginning Monday, December 14, 2020. The Judges' schedule will remain as is and the Judges will conduct their court remotely or at their discretion as needed.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED** that:

1. Effective Monday, December 14, 2020, all criminal and civil District Court proceedings, unless addressed below, shall be rescheduled for a date no sooner than 30 days from the issuance of this Order. Any person who has business before the Court which may be affected by this Order should call the Clerk of Superior Court at 252-574-3100.
2. Proceedings necessary to preserve the right to due process of law (e.g., a first appearance or bond hearing, the appointment of counsel for an indigent defendant, a probation hearing, a probable cause hearing, etc.) may be scheduled remotely at the Judge's discretion.
3. Proceedings for the purpose of obtaining emergency relief (e.g. a domestic violence protection order, temporary restraining order, juvenile custody order, judicial consent to juvenile medical treatment order, civil commitment order, etc.) may be scheduled remotely at the Judge's discretion.
4. This Administrative Order does not prohibit a Judge or other judicial officer from exercising any in-chambers or ex parte jurisdiction conferred by law upon that Judge or judicial officer, as provided by law.

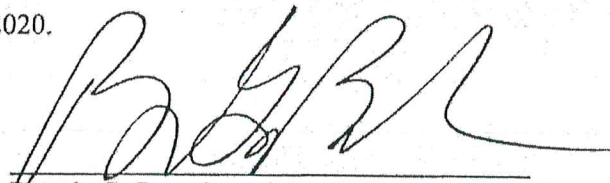
**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that:

1. The Clerk of Superior Court shall post a notice at the entrance to every court facility in their county directing that any person who has likely been exposed to COVID-19 should not enter the courthouse. A person who has likely been exposed to COVID-19 who has business before the courts shall contact the Clerk of Superior Court's office by telephone or other remote means, inform court personnel of the nature of his or her business before the Court, and receive further instruction. For purposes of this Order, a person who has likely been exposed to COVID-19 is defined as any person who:
  - a. Has traveled to another state within the previous 14 days;
  - b. Has been directed to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor;
  - c. Has been diagnosed with COVID-19; or

- d. Resides with or has been in close contact with any person in the abovementioned categories.
2. Anyone with an illness is strongly encouraged not to come to the courthouse.
  3. Everyone working or attending court at the courthouse should wash their hands frequently.
  4. The frequency of cleaning public areas including lobbies, elevators, door handles, and public restrooms shall be increased to three times daily.
  5. No spectators will be allowed in the courtrooms. Only defendants, victims, and witnesses are allowed in the courtrooms.
  6. No children under the age of 12 will be allowed in the courtroom, unless prior arrangements have been made with a court official.
  7. No writs will be issued. Cases on for disposition may be allowed at the Judge's discretion.
  8. Domestic Violence Ex-Parte Hearings and No Contact Order hearings will be held on every Thursday remotely.
  9. Only time-sensitive Juvenile cases will be heard on every Thursday remotely.
  10. District Court first appearances, bond hearings and jail cases (criminal and/or child support) will be held on every Thursday remotely.
  11. Temporary Restraining Orders will be conducted remotely.
  12. Only time-sensitive small claims cases are to be scheduled by the Clerk of Superior Court.
  13. All Family Court matters will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis. Parties and attorneys should be directed to the Family Court Administrator, Shirley Webb Owens 252-593-3082.

This Administrative Order shall remain in effect until further Order of the Court.

This the 11<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2020.



Brenda G. Branch  
Chief District Court Judge  
Judicial District Six