



March 13, 2020

To: Members of the Tenth Judicial District Bar

Fr: Hon. Paul Ridgeway, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge
Hon. Robert Rader, Chief District Court Judge
Hon. Lorrin Freeman, District Attorney
Hon. Blair Williams, Clerk of Superior Court
Hon. Chris Graves, Chief Magistrate
Mr. Chuck Caldwell, Public Defender
Ms. Kellie Myers, Trial Court Administrator

Re: Tenth Judicial District Response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Earlier today, Chief Justice Cheri Beasley entered an order implementing measures designed to curb the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the risk of exposure caused by crowded sessions of court. Consistent with the Chief Justice's order, effective Monday, March 16, superior court and district court proceedings of the Tenth Judicial District will be rescheduled for at least 30 days, with limited exceptions, which appear on the following pages.

The emergency directive of the Chief Justice does not apply to proceedings in which a jury has already been empaneled and it does not prohibit a judge or other judicial officer from exercising in chambers or *ex parte* jurisdiction conferred by law upon that judge or judicial officer, as provided by law. Additionally, the emergency directive *does not extend filing and other deadlines*.

Court offices in the Wake County Courthouse and Justice Center will remain open for business. However, unless you are required to appear in-person to conduct your business, attorneys and the public are strongly encouraged to use email and telephone to communicate with staff of the Tenth Judicial District. Contact information may be found on the [Judicial Directory](#).

[Online court services](#) are available for handling some court business, including citation services, paying your ticket, court payments, signing up for court date notifications and reminders, eFiling court documents for certain courts and case types, and more.

Accurate and timely information may be obtained from the following resources:

- Questions or concerns may be emailed to: WakeCourtHotLine@nccourts.org
- Information about the North Carolina Judicial Branch system-wide response to the COVID-19 virus is available on the [NCCourts.gov website](http://NCCourts.gov).
- Information specific to Wake County courts will be available [here](#).

CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT

- Maintain normal office hours to accept filings, until further notice
- Guardianship Hearings will be conducted as needed, subject to health precautions, including video testimony, as determined by the Clerk of Court.
- Involuntary Commitments will be conducted as needed, subject to health precautions, including video testimony, as determined by the Clerk of Court.
- Estate administration matters will be conducted, although in-person meetings will subject to health precautions as determined by the Clerk of Court. Please schedule estate matters via [this link](#) when possible.
- Estate hearings will be postponed for thirty days unless consent by parties to conduct remotely.
- Special Proceeding hearings will be postponed for thirty days unless consent by parties to conduct remotely.

MAGISTRATE AND SMALL CLAIMS

- The Hammond Road Magistrate's Office will be open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and normal operations will continue for Warrants for Arrest, Magistrate's Orders, Criminal Summons, Initial Appearances, Cash Bonds / Property Bonds, Involuntary Commitment Orders, Juvenile Petitions, and Secured and Non-Secured Custody Orders.
- Initial appearances and weddings will be conducted at the Hammond Road Magistrate's Office. Courtroom 901 will not be in operation.
- All Small Claims court proceedings are suspended, and pending matters will be continued and rescheduled.

DISTRICT COURT:

- Maintain normal office hours, until further notice

Civil Domestic Violence Court

- Courtroom 5A (Wake County Courthouse) will operate daily for the purpose of hearing *ex parte* Domestic Violence Protective Order (DVPO) requests and ten-day return hearings pursuant to G.S. 50B.
- Courtroom 5A (Wake County Courthouse) will also hear requests for emergency relief pursuant to G.S. 50C.
- DVPOs with no *Ex Parte* Order, Motions to Show Cause, Motions to Modify or Set Aside, and Motions for Return of Weapons may be continued beyond 30 days

Civil District Court

- Courtroom 5B (Wake County Courthouse) will be operating daily to hear emergency and time sensitive *ex parte* matters including, but not limited to: Motions for TRO, Motions to Stay Eviction, and requests for temporary No Contact Orders pursuant to the Workplace Violence Prevention Act
- Courtroom 5B (Wake County Courthouse) will also hear overflow DVPO cases and 50C cases from Courtroom 5A as needed, as well as child support enforcement cases where the defendant is in custody.
- All District Court Arbitrations will be rescheduled beyond 30 days.

Domestic Court

- All domestic courts will be closed and cases will be rescheduled beyond 30 days.

- Courtroom 5B (Wake County Courthouse) will hear all DVPO cases previously assigned to a Family Court Judge.
- Any Emergency Custody cases or other emergency matters will be heard in Courtroom 5B (Wake County Courthouse) or by a Judge assigned to the regular domestic court rotation, as available.

Criminal District Court

- Courtroom 301 (Wake County Justice Center) will be operating daily for morning sessions only to hear scheduled felony cases with defendants in custody and any emergency matters. All cases with defendants not in custody will be continued.
- Courtroom 303 (Wake County Justice Center) will operate daily, morning and afternoon, to hear domestic violence first appearances and any scheduled misdemeanor cases (DV, Criminal, Traffic) with defendants in custody. All cases with defendants not in custody will be continued.
- Courtroom 304 (Wake County Justice Center) will operate daily in the afternoon to hear first appearances by remote video.
- Courtroom 304 (Wake County Justice Center) will operate on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings only to hear probation violation cases with defendants in custody. All cases with defendants not in custody will be continued.
- All other criminal and traffic courts will be closed.

Juvenile Abuse Neglect & Dependency Court

- Courtroom 4C (Wake County Courthouse) will be closed and cases will be rescheduled beyond 30 days.
- Hearings for Motions for Non-Secure Custody should be coordinated with Judge Bousman or Judge Davidian via the District Court Judges Office.

Juvenile Delinquency Court

- Courtroom 4B (Wake County Courthouse) will be closed and cases will be rescheduled beyond 30 days except for those cases where the juvenile is in secured custody. Secured Custody Reviews, first appearances, and cases with juveniles in secured custody should be coordinated with Judge Rader or Judge Chase via the District Court Judges Office.

Child Support Enforcement Court

- Courtroom 5D (Wake County Courthouse) will be closed and cases will be rescheduled beyond 30 days except for those cases where the defendant is in custody.
- Child support cases with the defendant in custody will be heard in Courtroom 5B (Wake County Courthouse).

SUPERIOR COURT:

- Maintain normal office hours, until further notice

Criminal Superior Court

- No calendar call on March 16, 2020
- No new jury trials; no jurors are to report (unless already empaneled on an ongoing matter as per instructions, subject to discretion of trial judge)
- Criminal court sessions will commence on March 17, 2020 for:

- Taking of pleas for defendants in custody, where feasible, as scheduled by the District Attorney after consultation with defense counsel; and
- Probation violations for persons in custody as follows: first appearances, bond, probable cause hearings, and dispositive hearings will commence March 17, with defendant appearing via video, as scheduled by the District Attorney.

Civil Superior Court

- Closed on Monday and Tuesday, March 16-17, 2020. There will be no calendar call in Courtroom 10C (Wake County Courthouse) on Monday morning.
- No new jury trials; no jurors are to report (unless already empaneled on an ongoing matter as per instructions, subject to discretion of trial judge)
- One Superior Court courtroom will be available for court sessions to conduct remote hearings, and to conduct in-person hearings if deemed necessary, as scheduled by staff of the Trial Court Administrator's (TCA) Office.
- Civil Superior hearings will be rescheduled beyond 30 days unless consent by parties to conduct remotely.