

In Re: COVID-19 Pandemic

)  
)  
)  
)  
)

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

On 13 March 2020, the Chief Justice of North Carolina issued an Order with two emergency directives affecting the North Carolina Judicial Branch in response to the emerging public health threat posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. On 19 March 2020, the Chief Justice of North Carolina issued another order extending time and periods of limitation for documents and papers due to be filed and acts due to be done in the trial courts.

On 27 March 2020, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 121 directing all individuals in the state to stay in their place of residence subject to limited exceptions. North Carolina's courts are a critical government function and are therefore exempt from the order. Nevertheless, we are directed, to the extent practicable, to maintain social distancing requirements, including "facilitating online or remote access by customers if possible."

The Chief Justice of North Carolina has found that additional emergency directives under N.C.G.S. § 7A-39(b)(2) are now necessary to reduce the spread of infection and to ensure the continuing operation of essential court functions.

Accordingly, the Chief Justice of North Carolina hereby determined and declared under N.C.G.S. § 7A-39(b)(2) that catastrophic conditions resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak have existed and continue to exist in all counties of this state.

On April 2, 2020 Cheri Beasley, the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, issued an Emergency Order pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 7A-39(b)(2) which became effective immediately and expire on 1 May 2020. The Chief Justice of North Carolina expects to extend the directives of her Order an additional 30-days and has asked judicial stakeholders to plan of the directives through the month of May 2020.

***Court offices in the Dare County 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, darecountyclerk@nccourts.org, and telephone, (252) 475-5200, to communicate with the staff of the Dare County Clerk of Courts Office. Other contact information may be found on the Judicial Directory located on the [www.nccourts.gov](http://www.nccourts.gov) website.

notifications and reminders and more.

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

- Questions or concerns please call the Dare County Clerk of Courts Office at (252)475-5200 or email at [darecountyclerk@nccourts.org](mailto:darecountyclerk@nccourts.org)
- Information about the North Carolina Judicial Branch system-wide response to the COVID-19 virus is available on the web at [www.nccourts.gov](http://www.nccourts.gov).
- Information specific to Dare County courts will be available at [www.nccourts.gov](http://www.nccourts.gov) and [www.darenc.com](http://www.darenc.com).

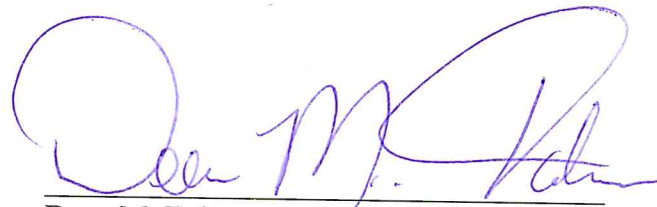
The Dare County Clerk of Superior Courts makes the following directives:

- Maintain normal office hours with limited staff to accept filings, until further notice
- Work with the District Attorney's Office, Senior Resident Superior Court Judges Office and the Chief District Court Judges Office to reschedule those superior court and district court proceedings which may be continued to a date no sooner than June 1, 2020 in compliance with the Chief Justices Order dated April 2, 2020 and the Administrative Order of the Superior Court and District Court, for Judicial District 1 dated March 26, 2020.
- All proceedings before the Dare County Clerk of Courts Office will be rescheduled to a date no sooner than June 1, 2020, unless:
  1. the proceeding will be conducted remotely;
  2. the proceeding is necessary to preserve the right to due process of law
  3. the proceeding is for the purpose of obtaining emergency relief
  4. the senior resident superior court judge, the chief district court judge and the clerk of superior court determines that the proceeding can be conducted under conditions that protect the health and safety of all participants.
- Estate administration matters are recommended to be conducted by telephone (252) 475-5200 or email [darecountyclerk@nccourts.org](mailto:darecountyclerk@nccourts.org). In person meetings will be subject to the health precautions addressed in this administrative order and will be determined on a case by case basis.
- Estate filings subject to statutory guidelines are granted by this administrative order an extension of time until the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June 2020.
- A notice has been placed at the entrance to the Justice Center directing that any person who has been likely exposed to COVID-19 and who has business before the courts to call the Dare County Clerk of Courts Office at (252) 475-5200 for further instructions and not enter the building. The Chief Justice of North Carolina defines likely been exposed to COVID-19 as any person who:
  1. has travelled internationally within the preceding 14 days;
  2. is experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath;

5. has been diagnosed with COVID-19; or
  6. resides with or has been in close contact with any person in the abovementioned categories.
- Work towards establishing an approved method to conduct mandatory proceedings by remote audio and video transmission in accordance with the Chief Justice of North Carolina's Emergency Directive 3 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April 2020.
  - The Dare County Clerk of Superior Courts encourages everyone to submit filings by mail rather than in person. The Dare County Clerk of Courts Office can be reached by telephone at (252) 475-5200 or by email at [darecountyclerk@nccourts.org](mailto:darecountyclerk@nccourts.org). Filings made in person will be received in the lobby area of the office and will be subject to the Chief Justice of North Carolina's Emergency Directive 2 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April 2020.
  - The Dare County Clerk of Superior Courts Office will follow the guidelines of the Chief Justice of North Carolina's Emergency Directive 7 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April 2020.
  - The Dare County Clerk of Courts Office will be closing the cashier's office daily from 11:30 am until 1:30 pm for all in-person payments.

Please review the Administrative Orders from Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Jerry R. Tillett addressing matters before the Superior Court in Dare County and the Administrative Orders from Chief District Court Judge Edgar Barnes addressing matters before the District Court in Dare County. The Dare County Clerk of Superior Court may amend or revoke any part of this directive to ensure that the court continues to administer justice while protecting the health and safety of court officials, court personnel and the public in agreement with the Orders from the Chief Justice of North Carolina, the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge for District 1 and the Chief District Court Judge for District 1. This Administrative Order will remain in effect through the 31<sup>st</sup> day of May 2020.

Issued this the 7<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020.



Dean M. Tolson  
Dare County Clerk of Superior Court