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**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**  
**27B JUDICIAL DISTRICT: CLEVELAND AND LINCOLN COUNTY**  
**COURTHOUSE INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

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Operation of the courts requires a coordinated effort among county officials, the Clerk of Superior Court, the Chief District Court Judge and the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge (hereinafter referred to as “local decision makers”). The purpose of this paper is to formulate and announce policies and procedures applicable to closings or delays due to inclement weather or other good cause. The following uniform policy is adopted for the Superior Courts and District Courts within the 27B Judicial District in the event of inclement weather:

- 1) A decision must first be made by the County Manager on the closing or delayed opening of county buildings. In the event that county buildings will close as a result of inclement weather, the Clerk of Superior Court shall post a conspicuous notice to the public for the location and hours during which time sensitive documents may be deposited for filing with the Clerk. In the event that county buildings are open to the public, the Clerk of Superior Court will make every effort to be open for business and operate on a schedule applicable to county buildings.
- 2) In order to minimize confusion to the public, every effort will be made to operate all courts on the same schedule so that public announcements will apply to all courts. Notwithstanding this policy, each presiding Judge retains the discretion to modify the hours of operation in his/her individual courtrooms as individual circumstances and safety factors may dictate for the operation of his/her court.
- 3) In the event circumstances do not allow advance notice of inclement weather, the policy will be as follows:
  - A) **FIRST DAY:** On the first day of inclement weather and during the course of the regular school year, all court operations will be subject to the closing and/or delay decision of the public school system of each county. For Cleveland County, all courts will follow the “Shelby Zone” closing and/or delay information when that option is presented by County Management. In the event that the “Shelby Zone” closing and/or delay information is not made available by County Management, court operations will follow “Cleveland County Schools” closing and/or delay information. Unless particular circumstances cause a decision to be made otherwise, school closings and delays will affect court schedules as follows:
    1. In the event that County Schools are closed due to inclement weather, courts will not operate on the morning of the first day of closing. A decision will be made

and published by local decision makers as to afternoon sessions no later than 11:00 a.m. In the event that a decision is made to hold afternoon sessions on such day, the Clerk's Office shall open at 11:00 a.m. and courts shall convene for the afternoon beginning at 1:00 p.m.

2. In the event that County Schools operate on a delayed schedule, the courts for that county shall follow the same delay.

- B) **SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT DAYS:** A decision shall be made and communicated by local decision makers of the schedule for court operations during the second and any subsequent consecutive day of inclement weather pursuant to Rule 1 and Rule 3A, which may or may not correspond to county school operations.
- C) This information will be reviewed by the office of the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge in consultation with the Chief District Court Judge and Elected Clerk of Superior Court. Upon that communication, a decision concerning the Court Operation schedule will be made. School closings and cancellations shall be given priority in being considered for the Court Operation schedule.
- D) **DELAY INFORMATION:** In the event that court operations report to be under a delay, the delay procedure will be as follows:

Court operations report on **two (2) hour delay**, the Courthouse and the office of the Clerk of Superior Court will open at 10:00am. **First Appearance Court** will commence at **10:30am**. **Superior and District Court** sessions will begin at **11:00am**.

Court operations report on **three (3) hour delay**, the Courthouse and the office of the Clerk of Superior Court will open at 11:00am. **First Appearance Court** will commence at **12:30pm**. **Superior and District Court** sessions will begin at **1:00pm**.

- E) The decision for MORNING sessions of court will be made by 6:15am and should be posted as per Rule 4 of this Administrative Order no later than 6:45am, when conditions allow. Additionally, the decision concerning the AFTERNOON sessions of court will be made no later than 11:00am and should be posted as per Rule 4 of this Administrative Order no later than 11:30am, when conditions allow.
- 4) When a decision has been made concerning courthouse operations for both Cleveland and Lincoln County Courthouses, the Superior Court Trial Court Coordinator will:
    - A) Communicate the decision to the Clerk of Superior Court, District Attorney, Presiding Judges, Sheriff, Court Reporter(s), County Manager; and
    - B) Place such decision on media outlets serving Cleveland and Lincoln County, including WBTV, WSOC TV, News14 Carolina and via post to the 27B Judicial District Facebook; and
    - C) Send a courthouse-wide self-subscription texting service to all who have subscribed as to each schedule for both the Cleveland and Lincoln County Courthouse(s).

- 5) When circumstances allow, the decision to cancel and/or delay ALL courthouse operations rests with the office of the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, in consultation with the Chief District Court Judge and Elected Clerk of Superior Court for both Cleveland and Lincoln County Court Systems.

In the event that the Chief District Court Judge and/or the Clerk of Superior Court are unavailable/inaccessible for such communications, the office of the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge will communicate with the Chief District Court Judge and Clerk of Superior Court's designee concerning the current inclement weather forecast and remaining projected forecast for the 27B Judicial District.

- 6) This policy shall be published and distributed to all Court officials within the 27B Judicial District, 27B Local Bar Roster, all attorneys having a box located within the Cleveland and Lincoln Courthouse, local law enforcement agencies and by being published on the Judicial Branch's website ([www.nccourts.org](http://www.nccourts.org)) for both Cleveland and Lincoln County.

By the entry of this Administrative Order, any previous orders concerning the inclement weather policy within the 27B Judicial District are hereby superseded.

ORDERED this the 16<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2018.

/s/ FORREST D. BRIDGES  
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge  
27B Judicial District - Cleveland & Lincoln Counties

/s/ KINSLEY M. CRAIG  
Superior Court Designee, Trial Court Coordinator  
27B Judicial District - Cleveland & Lincoln Counties

/s/ LARRY J. WILSON  
Chief District Court Judge  
27B Judicial District - Cleveland & Lincoln Counties

/s/ K. DEAN BLACK  
District Court Designee, District Court Judge  
27B Judicial District - Cleveland & Lincoln Counties

/s/ MITZI M. JOHNSON  
Cleveland County Clerk of Superior Court  
27B Judicial District

/s/ LISA B. PHILLIPS, Assistant Clerk of Court  
/s/ LACEY I. ANGE, Assistant Clerk of Court  
Cleveland County Clerk of Superior Court Designee  
27B Judicial District

/s/ FRED R. HATLEY  
Lincoln County Clerk of Superior Court  
27B Judicial District

/s/ DONNA M. GILBERT, Assistant Clerk of Court  
Lincoln County Clerk of Superior Court Designee  
27B Judicial District