



State of North Carolina
General Court of Justice
Superior Court District 11-B

THOMAS H. LOCK
SENIOR RESIDENT SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: MEMBERS OF THE JOHNSTON COUNTY BAR

FROM: THOMAS H. LOCK

DATE 9 DECEMBER 2020

RE: COURT CLOSURES DUE TO COVID-19

District Attorney Susan Doyle has notified me that two of her employees have tested positive for COVID-19. Shortly after the pandemic began, she divided her staff into teams and kept them separated to mitigate the spread of the virus in the event of an infection. The team members who have been in close contact with the infected employees are in quarantine. We also have engaged in contact tracing and do not believe that any members of the private bar have been in close contact with the quarantined employees. (Please see my 2 November 2020 memorandum to you for the CDC's definition of "close contact.")

After conferring with Chief District Court Judge Jackie Lee and Johnston County Health Director Dr. Marilyn Pearson, I have decided to modify the operations of our criminal courts through the end of next week. Tomorrow, 10 December 2020, Johnston County criminal superior court and district courts will convene as scheduled, but priority will be given to those cases involving defendants in custody. On Friday, 11 December, the only cases heard in superior court will be alleged probation violations involving in-custody defendants. District disposition court will meet Friday and adjudicate the traffic cases of those unrepresented defendants who appear. Attorneys representing clients with cases in disposition court may call the district attorney's office or meet with the disposition court prosecutor about the scheduling or disposition of their cases. Benson district court will convene at 10:00 a.m. on Friday. The prosecutors assigned to superior and district criminal courts for the rest of this week are members of the district attorney's office not presently subject to quarantine.

All criminal district courts scheduled for next week (the week of 14 December 2020) are cancelled. In addition, next week's jury trial session of criminal superior court is cancelled. Unless otherwise ordered by Judge Lee or me, civil district and superior courts will meet as scheduled next week since the civil courts are not impacted by the incidents of COVID-19 in the district attorney's office.

Special Superior Court Judge Stan Carmical or I will be available next week to hear emergency superior court matters, and Judge Lee will have a district court judge available to conduct first appearances and hear *ex parte* petitions for domestic violence restraining orders.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation. If you have any questions about particular courts, please do not hesitate to contact Judge Lee, Ms. Doyle, or me. (Ms. Doyle has authorized me to share her personal cell phone number: 919-631-9376.)

cc: The Honorable Jacquelyn L. Lee, Chief District Court Judge
The Honorable Susan I. Doyle, District Attorney
The Honorable Michelle C. Ball, Clerk of Superior Court
The Honorable Steve Bizzell, Sheriff of Johnston County
Marilyn Pearson, M.D., Johnston County Health Director