

**FILED**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
JUDICIAL DISTRICT 26

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
2021 AUG 10 P 6:21

21 R 1371

MECKLENBURG COUNTY

MECKLENBURG CO., C.S.C.

IN RE:

BY \_\_\_\_\_

**COURT CLOSURES NECESSARY  
TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH  
AND SLOW THE SPREAD OF  
COVID-19 IN THE MECKLENBURG  
COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

THIS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER has been entered to ensure the fair and proper administration of justice and to mitigate the public health threat posed by COVID-19 within the Mecklenburg County Courthouse. The undersigned Senior Resident Superior Court Judge and Chief District Court Judge enter this Administrative Order pursuant to the inherent authority of the court and pursuant to its administrative supervision and authority over the operation of the Superior and District Courts in the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 7A-41.1, 7A-146. This Order is intended to address the unprecedented public health threat posed by COVID-19 to court staff, the Bar and the public who have business in the Mecklenburg County Courthouse.

Whereas, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new, highly-contagious strain of coronavirus that can be spread from person to person; and

Whereas, between August 6, 2021 and August 10, 2021 at least twelve employees assigned to work in the Mecklenburg County Courthouse have tested positive for COVID-19 and over forty employees have been ordered to quarantine consistent with Mecklenburg County Public Health directives; and

Whereas, additional court staff and employees have reported symptoms of COVID-19 since August 7, 2021; and

Whereas, testing has been scheduled for over 30 court staff and employees and contact tracing is being conducted by Mecklenburg County Public Health Department for employees who have tested positive and will not be completed prior to August 14, 2021; and

Whereas, both vaccinated and unvaccinated staff have contracted COVID-19 over the past week; and

Whereas, the spread of COVID-19 in Mecklenburg County has increased significantly over the last fourteen days, with an average of 394 cases per day and a positivity rate of 12.4 per cent; and

Whereas, the extent of the COVID-19 outbreak amongst Mecklenburg County court staff and personnel cannot be fully ascertained and contained as of the date of the entry of this order; and

Whereas, the Director of Mecklenburg County Public Health has advised the Key Court Officials of the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District that cancellation of court proceedings and closure of the Mecklenburg County courthouse are necessary measures to prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19 amongst court staff, members of the bar and the public; and

Whereas, Governor Roy Cooper declared a State of Emergency in North Carolina on March 10, 2020, in response to the emerging public health threat posed by COVID-19 by entry of Executive Order No. 116, *Declaration of a State of Emergency to Coordinate Response and Protective Actions to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19*; and

Whereas, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020; and

Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) has warned of the extreme public threat posed by the Delta variant of COVID-19 globally and in the United States; and

WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED ADJUDGED AND DECREED that effective immediately and until August 14, 2021:

1. All sessions of district and superior court in the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District are cancelled and rescheduled to a date after August 13, 2021 except as follows:
  - a. Ex Parte requests for temporary Domestic Violence Protection Orders should be made before the district court judge assigned to the Public Window in the Mecklenburg County Jail; and
  - b. Motions for Temporary Injunctive Relief should be made before the district court judge assigned to Courtroom 4110; and
  - c. Motions for Non-Secure Custody of a juvenile pursuant to N.C.G.S. 7B-504 should be made before the district court judge assigned to the Public Window in the

Mecklenburg County Jail and Non-Secure Custody hearings required pursuant to N.C.G.S. 7B-506 will be heard via WebEx by the assigned judge as previously scheduled; and

- d. All Secured Custody hearings scheduled pursuant to N.C.G.S. 7B-1906 will be heard remotely via WebEx using the link for courtroom 8390; and
  - e. All Civil Involuntary Commitment Hearings and Judicial Review of Admission of Minors pursuant to N.C.G.S. 122C will be heard via WebEx as previously scheduled.
  - f. First Appearance hearings scheduled pursuant to N.C.G.S. 15A-601 will be heard remotely via WebEx in courtroom 4150 of the Mecklenburg County Courthouse;
  - g. The Superior Court jury trial held over from the August 2, 2021 trial session will resume on August 11, 2021 in Courtroom 5370; and
  - h. Felony Probation Violation Probable Cause hearings pursuant to N.C.G.S. 15A-1345(c) will be heard as scheduled in Superior Court; and
  - i. All grand jury proceedings will continue as scheduled.
2. The Clerk of Superior Court will close its office through August 13, 2021. All persons seeking to file legal documents should submit their filings using the secure receptacle on the first floor designated by the Clerk of Superior Court. The cashier will accept financial payments on the First Floor of the Mecklenburg County Courthouse from 9AM until 3PM between August 11 and August 13, 2021.
  3. The Key Court Officials of the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District will continue to meet before August 13, 2021 and consult with the Director of Mecklenburg County Public Health, assess the extent of the August 6, 2021 COVID-19 outbreak and the feasibility of opening the Mecklenburg County Courthouse for scheduled session on or after August 16, 2021.

Entered and effective, this the 11<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021.



The Honorable William R. Bell  
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge



The Honorable Elizabeth T. Trosch  
Chief District Court Judge