

**AMENDED on May 14, 2020**

To: Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

From: Honorable Teresa Vincent, Chief District Court Judge

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, 2020, several superior court, and district court proceedings of the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District will be rescheduled for **July 1, 2020, at the earliest**, with several 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.

***The Clerk's Office and Judges Chambers will remain open from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm for business until June 1, 2020. On June 1, 2020, the Clerk's office will be open for business from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm; whereas Judges Chambers will be open for business from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.*** 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 Eighteenth Judicial District. **Until May 26, 2020, any emergency and essential filings filed after 1:00 pm will be accepted by the Magistrates office in Greensboro and High Point between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm.** Although many offices are closing early, open courts shall continue to operate normally until the work is complete unless otherwise noted.

The Office of the District Attorney will not be open to the public but will be in the office to accept calls. **Their offices will reopen to the public on May 26, 2020. Madam District Attorney requests that visitors wear a face-covering.**

The Office of the Public Defender will not be open to the public but will be accepting phone calls from their assigned clients. **Their offices will reopen to the public on May 26, 2020. The Public Defender requests that visitors wear a face-covering.**

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, e-filing court documents for certain courts and case types, and more.

**CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT**

- Involuntary Commitments will be conducted as needed, subject to necessary precautions, including, but not limited to, video testimony.
- Guardianship Hearings will be conducted as needed, subject to necessary health precautions, as determined by the Clerk of Court

- Maintain normal office hours to for filings unless otherwise notified
- Estate Administration matters will be conducted. However, person to person interactions will be limited if health concerns arise, as determined by the Clerk of Court.
- Special Proceeding hearings will be postponed for thirty days unless the parties consent to conduct a hearing at a remote location, except judicial hospitalization cases shall be heard.

## **MAGISTRATE AND SMALL CLAIMS**

- The Greensboro and High Point magistrate offices will operate as normal 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. **However, the civil magistrates' offices in Greensboro and High Point shall be closed to the public at 1:00 pm until May 31, 2020. On June 1, 2020, the civil magistrates' office shall resume regular business hours from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.** Contact Chief Magistrates Julie Antonelli (GSO) and Chad Landen (Hpt.) if you have any questions.
- **All Small Claims court proceedings will proceed as usual. (GSO in Rms. 210 & 215 until further notified; Hpt. in Rm. 140)**
- Magistrates shall perform wedding ceremonies on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm by appointment only in the High Point and Greensboro jails.
- **All magistrate administrative courts are closed. Cases shall be continued past June 30, 2020. [Courtrooms 1A, 1B (GSO) and HP02 (Hpt. - Rm. 162)]**

## **District Court**

- Maintain office hours from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm through May 29, 2020. However, the office will resume regular business hours from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on June 1, 2020.
- Judges will be available to consider *Ex-Parte* Emergency Custody request(s) and other matters, if appropriate, that may be addressed *ex parte*, such as a Motion to Recall an Order for Arrest from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm through May 29, 2020. On June 1, 2020, the Judges' Chambers will resume regular business hours from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Consequently, judges will be available to consider *ex parte* orders.

## **Arraignment Court (Courtroom 3B- Hpt.)**

- **All cases shall be continued past June 30, 2020.**

## **Civil Domestic Violence Court**

- Courtrooms 2B (GSO) and 3A (High Point) will operate as normal handling domestic violence *ex-parte* matters and return hearings, unless otherwise indicated.

## **Civil/Domestic District Courts**

- Courtrooms 2B & 3A (Hpt – They will operate as indicated in the foregoing provision). Emergency custody hearings will also be held in courtrooms 2B & 3A (Hpt). Request for ex-parte emergency custody orders may be handled remotely or in person. Please contact Stephanie Wallace or Pat Dixon (Trial Court Coordinators) to request remote hearings.
- Courtrooms 2E and 3A (in GSO & Hpt) will be open per COVID19 protocol. All pro-se and Magistrate appeals cases will be continued to July 2020. There will be remote calendars calls for courtrooms 2E and 3A (GSO & Hpt) on June 1, 2020. Also, in June 2020, there will be NO daily docket calls; only parties in the first case for a hearing will report to the courtroom; otherwise, attorneys and litigants will be on telephone standby.
- All District Court Arbitrations will be rescheduled for a minimum of thirty (30) days. The arbitrator, attorney(s), or litigant(s) may request a remote hearing as opposed to an in-person arbitration. Please contact Doretta Sims with any questions.
- Special Settings – Please contact the Trial Court Coordinator (Mrs. Stephanie Wallace or Pat Dixon) to reschedule.
- Please contact Stephanie Wallace or Pat Dixon if you have any questions.

## **Criminal/Traffic District Court**

- Courtroom 1C & 3C (Criminal Courts in GSO & Hpt.) will be open only for cases involving attorneys that have submitted hearing request forms (See COVID19 Protocol for Criminal Courts). Otherwise, cases will be continued past June 2020.
- Courtroom 1D (Traffic Court) will be open for cases involving attorneys that have submitted hearing request forms and remote traffic court on Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 11:00 am (See COVID19 Protocol for Traffic Courts and Remote Hearings). Otherwise, cases will be continued past June 2020.
- Courtroom 2C will be open for First Appearances/Bond Motions at 11:30 am each day (until further notice) and will be available for probation violations (jail cases) and other criminal jail cases (preferably older cases) on Thursdays (in GSO beginning April 9, 2020, from 9:00 am to 11:30 am). The number of cases will be limited based on the time constraints.
- Courtroom 3D (High Point on Thursdays beginning April 16, 2020, from 9:00-11:30 am for District Court – probation violations & misd. criminal jail cases) The number of cases will be limited based on the time constraints. First Appearances/Bond Motions will also be heard in courtroom 3D each day at 11:30 am.

### **Juvenile Abuse Neglect & Dependency Court/Delinquency Court**

- Courtrooms are open only for felony first appearances, non-secured, secured custody, adjudications, disposition (for detained juveniles) hearings as scheduled. Otherwise, cases will be continued. Court may be held remotely when it is feasible to do so.

### **Child Support Court**

- This court shall be open with limitations on the number of cases set; and with restrictions on the number of litigants allowed in the courtroom. (See COVID19 Protocol for Child Support Court)

### **Specialty Courts**

- Specialty Courts (Adult DTC, Mental Health Court and Juvenile DTC) will operate in accordance with the current schedule. However, only non-compliant participants shall appear in person for court sessions. Court may be held remotely when it is feasible to do so.

### **Mediation Program**

- Orientation sessions will be presented online.
- Mediations will be handled remotely.
- Mediation offices will be open from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

### **Judicial Waivers/Hospitalizations**

- Cases will be heard as usual.

### **Minor Settlement Conferences**

- Minor settlements shall be handled remotely. Please contact Stephanie Wallace in Greensboro or Pat Dixon in High Point (Trial Court Coordinators) for assistance in scheduling a conference.

## Superior Court

We will run courts on June 1, assuming that is the official start date. **Jury trials will not begin until August 3, 2020, at the earliest.**

### **Criminal Court**

- One court will handle admin and probation violations
- The other court will also handle admin and fill in with guilty pleas
- Calendars will be done daily in order to control the number of people who come to the courtrooms

### **Civil Court**

- There will not be any trials for the first month
- We will focus on the backlog of motions
- Some weeks we will run two civil courts
- Calendars will be done daily in order to control the number of people who come to the courtrooms

For Civil Court matters, please contact Brittany Robinson in Greensboro or Wendy Stuart in High Point.

This the 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

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John Craig  
Resident Superior Court Judge

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Teresa H, Vincent  
Chief District Court Judge, 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

**\*Provisions in red denote changes since entry of the previous order.**