

ADR 139

STOKES AND SURRY COUNTIES

FILED

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE

2020 SEP 17 P 2 20

SUPERIOR AND DISTRICT COURT DIVISIONS

JUDICIAL DISTRICT 17B

SURRY COUNTY, OSC

IN RE:)
COVID-19 PHASE II)
SCHEDULING OF CASES)
)

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

In light of the well-known situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, this order is entered for the purpose of complying with the directives of the North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice with a goal of reducing the danger of the spread of the coronavirus while moving cases through the court system as efficiently as possible. Therefore, until further notice, cases in Judicial District 17B will be handled in the following ways:

1. All cases will be assigned a specific time to appear in their designated courtrooms. The daily schedule of cases will be posted outside of the courthouse. Each person attempting to enter the courthouse should check the list of cases and only enter the courthouse 15 minutes prior to the designated time frame for the case they are involved in. Cases will be scheduled according to attorney time slots. Attorneys appearing before the court will be directed by the Court as to when their time slot will be at least one day in advance.
2. District Criminal Court dockets will be capped at 75 cases per day. This does not include cases that are on the supplemental calendar. This cap is an effort to allow sufficient time to completely address all cases including any requested trials. It also will allow witnesses and victims more access to the courtrooms.
3. When the attorney's time slot is finished in each respective court, the attorney will be released promptly from that court in order for the attorney to go to the other courts the attorney may be scheduled to appear in.
4. The Sheriff's deputies at the front entrance of the courthouse will be given a daily schedule of when cases will be heard. Upon entry into the courthouse, each person will state their name and the business they have within the courthouse. There will not be a separate list of witnesses. Witnesses will be allowed in the courthouse based upon when the case that they appear as a witness is scheduled to be heard. Persons appearing in court for a particular case may be admitted into the courthouse 15 minutes prior to their designated time slot. In an effort to reduce the danger of the spread of coronavirus and limit the number of people in the courthouse, only those people whose business must be conducted in person will be allowed in the courthouse.

5. There is a maximum capacity set for each courtroom to ensure social distancing. The social distancing maximum capacity means, in cases appearing before the Courts, only defendants, victims and necessary witnesses will be allowed in the courtroom unless there is space available in the designated area. After reviewing the scheduling for the day, if a Judge finds there is space available in the courtroom for those not involved in the scheduled cases, he or she will inform the bailiffs. Otherwise, a specific request to enter the Courtroom can be made to the presiding Judge through the Judge's office.
6. The North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice has ordered that all persons entering the courthouse wear a mask. As the courthouse is a place to administer justice and not a designated public forum, **no person will be allowed to have any emblem or writing on the mask.** Everyone entering the courthouse will be subject to a temperature check. No one with a temperature above 99.9 will be allowed to enter the courthouse. If a temperature check indicates a fever, the person attempting to enter the courthouse shall sit for 5 minutes and a retake of the temperature will be conducted.
7. No one under the age of 16 will be allowed in the courthouse unless the child has been subpoenaed as a victim or witness that has been called in from stand by status to testify.
8. If an attorney has not met with his/her client, the hearing room outside the clerk's office will be available to meet with the client before the attorney's designated time slot. The attorney may walk ONE defendant in at a time and meet with him/her in the hearing room to prepare for court. There will not be time to talk with clients or sign paperwork DURING the designated time slot.
9. Defendants requesting a trial in District Court or a trial of a probation violation in Superior Court will be asked to return at a specified time for such trial to be conducted.
10. Each court will break PROMPTLY at the specified time frames so that each courtroom may be disinfected and cleaned during the morning and afternoon recesses. The morning breaks are as follows:
 - Courtroom 3: 10:15-10:30
 - Courtroom 2: 10:30-10:45
 - Courtroom 4: 10:45-11:00
 - Courtroom 1: 11:00-11:15Each courtroom will also be cleaned and disinfected during the lunch recess. It is important that all courts recess from 12:30 to 2:00 in order to allow for proper deep cleaning of the courtroom during the lunch recess.
11. Each courtroom will have the benches marked for designated seating to ensure social distancing.
12. Members of the public are not allowed to gather outside the courtrooms in the lobby. Only a total of 8 people may gather there and then only in the 8 socially distanced designated seats.

13. Each courtroom will have a maximum capacity listed on each door. The maximum capacity (including court personnel) and maximum number of cases scheduled at any one time is as follows:

Surry County

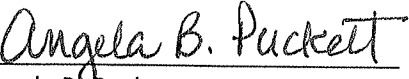
- Courtroom 1: Maximum capacity is 35 people and 25 cases may be scheduled at one time
Courtroom 2: Maximum capacity is 35 people and 25 cases may be scheduled at one time
Courtroom 3: Maximum capacity is 35 people and 25 cases may be scheduled at one time
Courtroom 4: Maximum capacity is 35 people and 25 cases may be scheduled at one time
Courtroom 5: Maximum capacity is 17 people and 7 cases may be scheduled at one time

Stokes County


- Courtroom A: Maximum capacity is 47 people and 37 cases may be scheduled at one time
Courtroom B: Maximum capacity is 27 people and 17 cases may be scheduled at one time
Courtroom C: Maximum capacity is 20 people and 10 cases may be scheduled at one time

14. In scheduling, Judges will consider the amount of personnel/witnesses involved in each case. That consideration may require that the number of cases scheduled for one time frame be less than the maximum allowed per courtroom in order to ensure a seat is available for each person and social distancing measures can be maintained.
15. Bailiffs should ensure no one is entering the courtroom without a marked seat being open and witnesses in the lobby outside of the courtroom are only allowed to be in areas with a socially distanced seat.
16. Each person appearing in court must sanitize his/her hands before entering the courtroom and again before signing or touching any papers that are to be handed to others in the courtroom. No sharing of pens and after a defendant, plaintiff or witness has used a pen, it is to be placed into the designated box for sanitizing.
17. In the courtroom, no one is to approach the clerk. Any file that is needed from the clerk will be placed on the end of the bench and then may be retrieved without any direct contact with the clerk.

This the 17th day of September, 2020.



Angela B. Puckett
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge



William F. Southern III
Chief District Court Judge