

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

ORDER IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Since 13 March 2020, the Chief Justice has issued a series of orders pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 7A-39(b) with extensions of time, extensions of periods of limitation, and other emergency directives that were deemed necessary to the continuing operation of essential trial court functions. The Chief Justice's orders were issued in response to the public health threat posed by the COVID-19 outbreak and were intended to reduce the spread of infection in courthouses throughout the state.

On 27 March 2020, this Court issued an order in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, which extended deadlines imposed by the Rules of Appellate Procedure, encouraged electronic filing in the appellate courts, and credited back secure-leave periods in the appellate courts during the months of April 2020 and May 2020. In that order, the Court emphasized that additional relief in response to the COVID-19 outbreak would be forthcoming if circumstances warranted it.

On 30 April 2020, the Chief Justice formed the COVID-19 Task Force for the Judicial Branch and directed the task force to submit recommendations for additional emergency directives and operational changes that would ensure the continued functioning of the North Carolina court system. The task force submitted its initial recommendations to the Chief Justice on 7 May 2020.

After considering the task force's initial recommendations and the current circumstances in our state, additional relief from this Court is now warranted.

Accordingly, pursuant to Sections 7A-10.1 and 7A-34 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the Court hereby orders the following:

1. **Temporary Modification of the Clerk of Superior Court's Duty Under Rule 2(b) of the General Rules of Practice.** Until the Chief Justice determines that catastrophic conditions no longer exist statewide, notwithstanding Rule 2(b) of the [General Rules of Practice](#), the clerk of superior court's duty to publish and distribute the calendar is timely performed if the clerk publishes and distributes the calendar no later than two weeks prior to the first day of court.
2. **Temporary Modification to the Allowance of Secure-Leave Periods Under Rule 26(b) of the General Rules of Practice.** Notwithstanding Rule 26(b)(1) of the General Rules of Practice, between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2020, an attorney may enjoy three different secure-leave periods for any purpose regardless of the number of secure-leave periods enjoyed by the attorney between 1 January 2020 and 30 June 2020.
3. **Temporary Modification to the Attendance Requirement in Rule 2 of the Rules of Continuing Judicial Education.** Notwithstanding Rule 2 of the [Rules of Continuing Judicial Education](#), during the educational biennium beginning on 1 July 2019 and ending on 30 June 2021, a judge or justice may attend approved continuing legal or judicial education programs remotely.

Additional orders in response to the COVID-19 outbreak will be entered as circumstances may warrant.

Ordered by the Court in Conference, this the 14th day of May, 2020.


For the Court

WITNESS my hand and the seal of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, this the 14th day of May, 2020.


AMY L. FUNDERBURK
Clerk of the Supreme Court