

**ORDER OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE
OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA**

On 29 June 2020, I extended [Emergency Directives 2–8](#) in response to the public health threat posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. A further extension of Emergency Directives 2–8 is now necessary to reduce the spread of infection and to ensure the continuing operation of essential court functions.

Accordingly, I hereby determine and declare under N.C.G.S. § 7A-39(b)(2) that catastrophic conditions resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak have existed and continue to exist in all counties of this state.

Emergency Directive 2

The clerks of superior court shall post a notice at the entrance to every court facility in their county directing that any person who has likely been exposed to COVID-19 should not enter the courthouse. A person who has likely been exposed to COVID-19 and who has business before the courts shall contact the clerk of superior court's office by telephone or other remote means, inform court personnel of the nature of his or her business before the court, and receive further instruction. For purposes of this order, a person who has likely been exposed to COVID-19 is defined as any person who:

- a. has travelled internationally within the preceding 14 days;
- b. is experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath;
- c. has been directed to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor;
- d. has a known exposure to COVID-19;
- e. has been diagnosed with COVID-19; or
- f. resides with or has been in close contact with any person in the abovementioned categories.

Emergency Directive 3

Judicial officials throughout the state are hereby authorized to conduct proceedings that include remote audio and video transmissions, notwithstanding any other provision of law.

Judicial officials who conduct a proceeding that includes remote audio and video transmissions pursuant to this directive must safeguard the constitutional rights of those persons involved in the proceeding and preserve the integrity of the judicial process. To this end:

- a. While consent of the parties is not required to conduct a proceeding that includes remote audio and video transmissions, a party may, for good cause, object to the use of remote audio and video transmissions.
- b. If a criminal defendant's right to confront witnesses or to be present is implicated by the proceeding that is to be conducted, then the defendant must waive any right to in-person confrontation or presence before remote audio and video transmissions may be used.
- c. If the proceeding is required by law to be conducted in a way that maintains confidentiality, then confidentiality must be maintained notwithstanding the use of remote audio and video transmissions.
- d. If the proceeding is required by law to be recorded, then any remote audio and video transmissions that are used must be recorded.
- e. Each party to a proceeding that includes remote audio and video transmissions must be able to communicate fully and confidentially with his or her attorney if the party is represented by an attorney.

The authorization in this emergency directive does not extend to proceedings that involve a jury.

This emergency directive does not apply to proceedings in which the use of remote audio and video transmissions is already permitted by law. Those proceedings should continue as provided by law.

Emergency Directive 4

Attorneys and other persons who do not have business in a courthouse should not enter a courthouse, and those who do have business in a courthouse should not prolong their visit once their business has concluded. Attorneys are strongly encouraged to submit filings by mail rather than in person.

Emergency Directive 5

When it is required that any pleading, motion, petition, supporting affidavit, or other document of any kind to be filed in the General Court of Justice be verified, or that an oath be taken, it shall be sufficient if the subscriber affirms the truth of the matter to be verified by an affirmation or representation in substantially the following language:

“I (we) affirm, under the penalties for perjury, that the foregoing representation(s) is (are) true.

(Signed) _____”

This emergency directive does not apply to wills to be probated, conveyances of real estate, or any document that is not to be filed in the General Court of Justice.

Emergency Directive 6

Notwithstanding the manner of service described in Rule 5 of the Rules of Civil Procedure, service required by Rule 5 may be made electronically on a party or a party's attorney as follows:

If the party has consented in writing to service by electronic mail ("email"), then service may be made on the party by email to an address that is either included in the consent or is otherwise on record with the court in the case. The email must be timestamped before 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on a regular business day to be considered served on that day. If the email is timestamped after 5:00 P.M., then service will be deemed to have been completed on the next business day.

If the attorney has consented in writing to service by email, then service may also be made on the attorney by email to an address that is either included in the consent or is otherwise on record with the court in the case. The email must be timestamped before 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on a regular business day to be considered served on that day. If the email is timestamped after 5:00 P.M., then service will be deemed to have been completed on the next business day.

If one or more persons are served by email, then the certificate of service shall show the email address of each person so served.

Nothing in this emergency directive is intended to modify electronic service in the North Carolina Business Court, which continues to be governed by Business Court Rule 3.

Emergency Directive 7

The clerks of superior court are directed not to enter or report, until after 31 July 2020, a failure to comply for a criminal or infraction case where the 40th day following nonpayment falls on or after 6 April 2020 and before or on 31 July 2020.

Monetary obligations owed pursuant to a term of probation which is scheduled to end before or on 31 July 2020 are excluded from the operation of this emergency directive.

The extension of deadlines that I [ordered on 21 May 2020](#) for acts due to be done in criminal and infraction cases does not apply to payments of monies owed in criminal and infraction cases that are covered by this emergency directive or previous versions of this emergency directive.

Emergency Directive 8

Marriages establish and implicate numerous rights and legal obligations (e.g., military deployments, social security benefits, pensions, workers' compensation

benefits, and disability benefits). The date of marriage may impact these rights and legal obligations. It is therefore essential that individuals continue to have access to the performance of marriage ceremonies during this time.

Accordingly, magistrates shall continue to perform marriage ceremonies. Marriage ceremonies before magistrates shall be held in a location that is approved by the Chief District Court Judge and that is capable of allowing all persons in attendance to practice social distancing. Additionally, the Chief District Court Judge may restrict the hours and times during which marriage ceremonies are conducted, may require appointments for marriage ceremonies, and may restrict attendance at the marriage ceremonies.

* * *

Expiration of this Emergency Order and Guidance to Judicial System Stakeholders

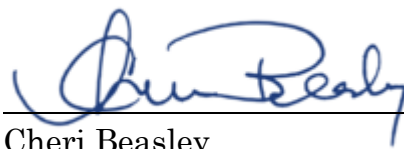
Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 7A-39(b)(2), the emergency directives contained in this order are effective 29 July 2020 and expire on 28 August 2020.

These emergency directives are crucial to ensuring that our court system continues to administer justice while protecting the health and safety of court officials, court personnel, and the public.

Court officials are authorized to liberally grant additional relief and accommodations to parties, witnesses, attorneys, and others with business before the courts.

Additional information about the Judicial Branch's response to the COVID-19 outbreak is available at <https://www.nccourts.gov/covid-19>.

Issued this the 29th day of July, 2020.



Cheri Beasley
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of North Carolina