



FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
STATE OF LOUISIANA
PARISHES OF: ACADIA, LAFAYETTE, VERMILION

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**15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT'S PHASE ONE EMERGENCY ORDER
RELATIVE TO COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY
PARISHES OF ACADIA, LAFAYETTE AND VERMILION**

In light of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the state of emergency declaration issued by Governor John Bel Edwards on March 13, 2020, the additional measures contained in his Proclamation JBE 2020-30 issued on March 16, 2020, and his Order allowing re-opening pursuant to Phase One guidelines; the Orders of the Louisiana Supreme Court of April 6, 2020, April 22, 2020 and April 29, 2020; the emergency declarations issued by Lafayette Mayor President Josh Guillory; the Fifteenth Judicial District Court issues the following Order relative to re-opening pursuant to Phase One, and issues the following Order for the Parishes of Acadia, Vermilion and Lafayette:

The courthouses in Acadia, Lafayette and Vermilion Parishes will reopen at 8:30 A.M. on May 18, 2020 on a limited basis and in accordance with Phase One COVID-19 guidelines as follows:

- 1) The Clerk of Court in each parish shall determine the number of individuals allowed in the clerk's offices at one time. The Clerk of Court from each parish may limit entry into the Clerk's office to individuals who have a business need to enter. All others may be serviced at the entry door to the clerk's office.
- 2) All people entering the courthouses in Acadia, Lafayette or Vermilion Parishes must wear a mask or face covering which covers the nose and mouth. No person shall enter the Courthouse if any of the following apply:
 - a) You are diagnosed with COVID-19;
 - b) You have been in contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days or have been advised by a physician to self-quarantine;
 - c) You are suffering from any of the following symptoms:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fever
- 3) All non-incarcerated individuals with criminal matters scheduled from May 18, 2020 forward shall appear on their scheduled court date and at the scheduled time. Only individual defendants shall appear; no additional individuals. At that time your matter will either be heard or rescheduled, but YOU MUST APPEAR. Be prepared to wait in outdoor accommodations before entry into the courthouse.

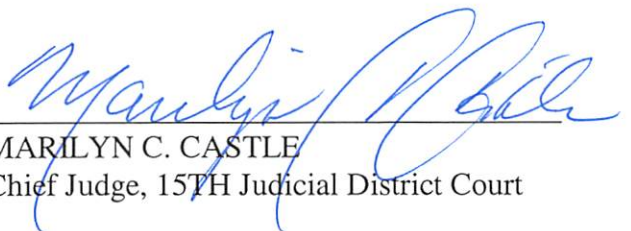
- 4) Adult criminal 72 hour hearings and bond reductions, including Gwen's Law hearings, and any matter permitted by Code of Criminal Procedure Article 562 involving incarcerated individuals will be conducted via telephone or video conference.
- 5) Civil hearings should be conducted via video and in scheduled time slots, **UNLESS GOOD CAUSE CAN BE SHOWN OTHERWISE**. In circumstances where video scheduling is not possible, civil in-person hearings will also be scheduled in time slots. If you have an upcoming civil court date and have not received information regarding your time slot, you should contact your attorney or, if not represented by an attorney, contact the presiding judge's office. **THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO CRIMINAL MATTERS. IN CRIMINAL MATTERS, ALL DEFENDANTS ARE TO APPEAR AS SCHEDULED UNLESS YOUR ATTORNEY CONTACTS YOU WITH OTHER DIRECTIONS.**
- 6) All matters taken up in person will be done in a fashion so as to limit the number of people in a courtroom or hallway to 25% capacity and to allow for 6 feet of distancing between people. Courtrooms and hallways are marked to indicate where seating is allowed.
- 7) Elevator use will be limited to 2 people with face masks. They should stand in opposite corners. No one will be allowed in an elevator without a mask.
- 8) All people, upon entering a courtroom, are to use hand sanitizer. Any person, before presenting documents to another party or to court personnel must re-apply hand sanitizer before doing so.
- 9) Only people with direct business with the court are allowed in the courtrooms (no additional individuals). Additional individuals desiring to attend a particular proceeding, should contact the presiding judge's office.
- 10) No one is allowed to go to a judge's office without an appointment. Contact the judge's office first by phone to discuss the reason for the visit.
- 11) People with walk-through duty matters will be directed to deposit them in a basket which the staff of the duty judge will periodically check and present to the duty judge.
- 12) Anyone who missed a criminal court date (misdemeanor, felony, traffic or arraignment) between March 20 and May 15, 2020 shall appear for service of a new court date as follows:
 - Last name beginning with letters **A-I** - Appear for re-service on May 26
 - Last name beginning with letters **J-Q** - Appear for re-service on May 27
 - Last name beginning with letters **R-Z** - Appear for re-service on May 28

Lafayette Parish will have a drive/walk through system. Vermilion Parish will re-serve on the courthouse porch. Acadia Parish will serve in a tent in front of the courthouse.

- 13) As per the April 22, 2020 Order of the Louisiana Supreme Court, no civil or criminal jury trial shall commence prior to June 30, 2020.

This Order shall be effective beginning at 12:01 AM on May 18, 2020, shall supersede all prior Orders of this Court related to COVID-19 and shall remain in effect until further orders are issued.

Issued on May 13, 2020 at Lafayette, Louisiana.



MARILYN C. CASTLE
Chief Judge, 15TH Judicial District Court