

24th Judicial District Court

Parish of Jefferson

State of Louisiana

ORDER 2020 – 007

Acting in accordance with Louisiana Constitution Article V, Section 1; pursuant to LSA RS. 1:55; due to the COVID-19 emergency as detailed in Governor John Bel Edwards's Declarations of Public Health Emergency, Jefferson Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng's Declaration of State of Emergency, and the emergency orders of the Louisiana Supreme Court, and in accordance with the inherent powers of this court, and in consideration of ongoing public health recommendations to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus and slowing the spread of the disease while balancing the need to protect the constitutional rights and public safety of the citizens of the state by maintaining access to Louisiana courts, the Chief Judge, acting on behalf of the Judges of the 24th Judicial District Court,

HEREBY ORDERS THAT:

Beginning **June 5, 2020** at 8:00 a.m., the Thomas F. Donelon Courthouse will be open to the public with the following Phase II restrictions:

1.
Jury Trials

Criminal and civil jury trials shall recommence beginning **July 20, 2020**.

2.
Civil Matters

- A. Civil trials and motions involving witness testimony may proceed in person, provided each courtroom shall be limited to a maximum of 12 persons, excluding the judge and the judge's staff. Social distancing of not less than 6 feet shall be observed. Judges are strongly encouraged to utilize attorney-client rooms adjacent to the division courtroom and the Sine Pro app to limit the number of persons in the courtroom and in the courthouse.
- B. All civil matters not involving witness testimony, including hearing officer conferences, shall continue to proceed by video conference via the court's Zoom platform, unless the judge determines there is good cause for an in person appearance.

3.

Criminal Matters

- A. Criminal defendants with notice to appear during the period of closure (March 16, 2020 through May 18, 2020) are ordered to report to the 24th Judicial District Court in person before **July 1, 2020** to receive service for a new court date. Notice will be provided by clerk's office on the first floor of the courthouse, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
- B. Criminal matters for incarcerated individuals shall continue to proceed by video conference.
- C. Criminal defense attorneys are encouraged to waive their client's presence for all stages of the proceedings that would not require a defendant's appearance.
- D. Attorneys shall complete all forms, including but not limited to, Boykin forms, specialty court contracts, stay away orders, and diversion referrals prior to the date and time scheduled for appearance/hearing.
- E. In criminal matters, attorneys are encouraged to attend court via video conference whenever possible.

4.

Phase II Restrictions

- A. All individuals seeking entry into the courthouse will be pre-screened. Pre-screening may include taking of temperatures by a licensed technician.
- B. Only criminal defendants with a scheduled court appearance and civil litigants, attorneys, witnesses, law enforcement officers or visitors authorized by a judge and admitted via the Sine Pro app, shall be allowed to enter the courthouse.
- C. Any party (criminal defendant, civil plaintiff, or civil defendant), attorney, witness, law enforcement officer, or visitor with business in the courthouse shall be required to download the free Sine Pro app on their cell phones. Sine Pro is a remote check-in system that will allow an individual to remain in their vehicle or otherwise outside of the courthouse but within the immediate vicinity of the courthouse, until their case is called. Individuals are to use the Sine Pro app to check in when they arrive at the courthouse.

Apple iPhone: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/sine-pro/id1086883094>

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=co.sine.sinecloud.pass>

Those experiencing any problems may also open the app and scan the QR codes on iPads provided at the entrance to the courthouse to check in. Individuals will receive a text minutes before their case is called instructing them to report to the courtroom. Individuals are required to be on time and remain in the vicinity of the courthouse until their case is called. **Notice to appear in court is satisfied only by actual appearance in court on the record.**

- D. All individuals entering the courthouse shall be required to wear a mask.
- E. Elevators shall be limited to a maximum of 4 persons.
- F. Hallways and corridors shall be clear and are to be used for access only. Social distancing shall be observed. Those waiting to be heard shall wait in the attorney client rooms adjacent to the division courtroom with a limit of 2 people per room.
- G. Each courtroom shall be limited to a maximum of 12 persons, excluding the judge and judge's staff. Social distancing of not less than 6 feet shall be observed.
- H. Judges are strongly encouraged to stagger their dockets and to utilize the Sine Pro app to limit the number of people in the courthouse.
- I. Divisions should schedule no more than 50 criminal defendants per day.
- J. All judges, court clerks, attorneys, and parties (criminal defendants, civil plaintiffs, or civil defendants) are strongly encouraged to limit in-person courtroom contact as much as possible by utilizing available technologies, including but not limited to Zoom video conferencing, Acuity online calendar notifications, Sine Pro check in, and JeffNet e-filing or fax filing.

5. **Filings**

Pleadings and motions shall be filed by electronic means whenever possible. In addition to e-filing documents through the JeffNet system, civil and criminal documents may be filed by fax. The clerk's office on the first floor is open and available to accept in person filings in criminal matters. Social distancing is to be observed. The clerk's office on the second floor is open and available to accept in person filings in civil matters by appointment only. Filings shall be placed in the judge's e-basket for expeditious handling. Filings may not be walked through to the division absent express authorization of the judge.

6.

Protective Orders

Any and all preliminary or permanent injunctions, protective orders, temporary restraining orders, ex parte protective orders, and/or criminal stay away orders issued pursuant to R.S. 9:361 et seq., R.S. 9:372, R.S. 46:1846, R.S. 46:2131 et seq., R.S. 46:2151, R.S. 46:2171 et seq., R.S. 46:2181 et seq., Children's Code Article 1564 et seq., Code of Civil Procedure Articles 3604 and/or 3607.1, and/or Code of Criminal Procedure Articles 30, 320, and/or 871.1 which have been issued by this Court and which would expire on or between the dates of March 13, 2020 and May 30, 2020 are EXTENDED until at least 4:30 p.m. on **July 1, 2020**. Service may be requested. This Court's prior orders respecting this issue remain in effect and applicable.

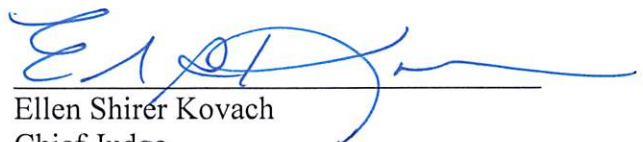
7.

Effective Date

This Order is effective at 8:00 a.m. on Friday **June 5, 2020** and will remain in effect until further notice. All provisions of this Court's prior orders shall remain in place except as expressly modified herein. Adjustments to this Order, if necessary, will be posted on the Court's website (www.courtonline.us or www.24jdc.us), the Louisiana Supreme Court website (www.lasc.org), and in the news media.

Gretna, Louisiana this 3d day of June, 2020.

For the 24th Judicial District Court


Ellen Shirer Kovach
Chief Judge