

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, GENERAL DISTRICT COURT AND JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT OF LOUDOUN COUNTY, FAUQUIER COUNTY AND RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY

IN RE: ALL PERSONS INTENDING TO ENTER THE COUNTY COURT COMPLEX INCLUDING THE COURTROOMS, CLERKS' OFFICES, JUVENILE COURT SERVICE UNIT AND ALL PUBLIC AREAS OF THE COURT COMPLEX

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

IT APPEARING that

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness, called coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China; and

That the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that COVID-19 has now been detected in more than 100 locations internationally, including in the United States; and

That the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a pandemic – an emergence and worldwide spread of a new disease for which most or all people do not have immunity; and

That the VDH has confirmed, as of this date, multiple coronavirus cases in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

That on March 12, 2020, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia declared a state of emergency, ordering, in part, “state and local governments to render appropriate assistance to prepare for this event, to alleviate any conditions resulting from the situation, and to implement recovery and mitigation operations and activities so as to return impacted areas to pre-event conditions as much as possible”; and

That the Governor announced additional steps to ensure the health and safety of all Virginians, including directing state agencies “to limit in-person meetings and non-essential, work-related gatherings,” and urging “localities...to limit large public events, effective immediately;” and

That on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

That Section 8.01-4 of the Code of Virginia, in pertinent part, authorizes the district courts and circuit court “from time to time, [to] prescribe rules for their respective districts and circuits. Such rules shall be limited to those rules necessary to promote proper order and decorum and the efficient and safe use of courthouse facilities and clerks' offices.” and

That this Order is necessary to promote the safe use of the courthouse facilities and clerks' offices in Loudoun, Fauquier and Rappahannock counties

It is hereby

ORDERED, effective immediately, and until further order of the Court, that the following practices shall be observed by all litigants, attorneys, and other members of the public intending to enter the Loudoun County, Fauquier County and Rappahannock County Courthouses (hereafter collectively "Courthouse"), until further Order of the Court:

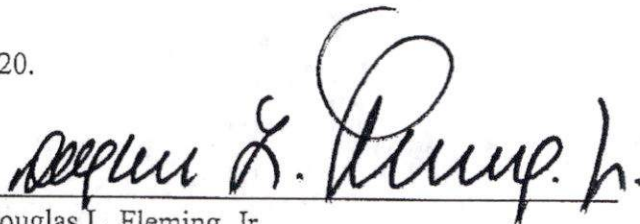
1. Any attorney or self-represented litigant shall make timely diligent inquiry of any individual who is necessary to litigation and who is expected to appear in the Courthouse (e.g. witness, parent of juvenile litigant, co-counsel) as to whether any such person is experiencing any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (e.g. respiratory symptoms, runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, and/or fever) or who has traveled internationally since January 1, 2020. If inquiry reveals that such symptoms are present in any such individual (or in counsel/self-represented litigant) or that he or she (or counsel/self-represented litigant) has travelled internationally after January 1, 2020, counsel or the self-represented litigant shall make reasonable and diligent efforts, (such as by telephone, electronic mail and/or facsimile) to seek a continuance before the court date without the individual entering the Courthouse.
2. All individuals who intend to enter the Courthouse and who are or may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., respiratory symptoms, runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat and/or fever) or who have traveled internationally since January 1, 2020 are strongly discouraged from entering the Courthouse without first calling the Clerk of the appropriate Court to determine whether there are alternative means of accomplishing that individual's intended business (e.g., electronic filing and/or payment; a telephonic or electronic continuance request; etc.)
3. Attorneys and litigants are urged to strongly discourage attendance in the Courthouse of individuals whose presence is not necessary for a court appearance (e.g., friends and family members of parties who are non-essential witnesses).
4. Attorneys and self-represented litigants are urged to confer in good faith in advance of scheduled court appearances to (a) reach stipulations and to resolve disputes comprehensively by agreement to minimize the number of court appearances in a case and to minimize or eliminate the need for certain individuals to appear in the Courthouse; (b) if disputes cannot be resolved by comprehensive agreement, to possibly agree upon allowing witnesses to appear by telephone or by video to eliminate the need for such individuals appearing in Court; and (c) to discuss additional means that may reduce the number of people having to physically appear in Court.
5. Counsel shall alert the Clerk of the appropriate Court in advance as to those inmates who may need to appear in a case in an effort to determine whether an alternative (e.g. closed circuit television, stipulation) may obviate need for the inmate's transport.

6. A liberal continuance policy is in effect in the Loudoun, Fauquier and Rappahannock circuit and district courts for civil cases in which both sides agree to the continuance of the case. Parties are encouraged to contact the clerk's office of the respective court in advance of the hearing date to request continuances. Each clerk's office's website may have additional information addressing continuance protocols.

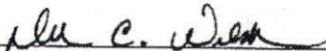
7. Special consideration will be given to continuance requests in cases involving ill or elderly parties, witnesses or counsel and those who otherwise may be especially susceptible to COVID-19.

8. For all continuance requests in advance of a hearing date, telephone and/or email requests for continuances (to the extent reasonably practicable) are encouraged.

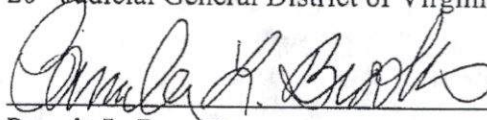
ENTERED this 16th day of March, 2020.



Douglas L. Fleming, Jr.
Chief Judge
20th Judicial Circuit of Virginia



Deborah C. Welsh
Chief Judge
20th Judicial General District of Virginia



Pamela L. Brooks
Chief Judge
20th Judicial Juvenile and Relations District of Virginia