

Tippecanoe County Courts Respond to COVID-19

March 19, 2020 for Immediate Release

In response to concerns about COVID-19, the Tippecanoe County Judges and the West Lafayette City Judge have been working together with local elected and health officials, law enforcement, emergency management teams, and local attorneys.

The Indiana State Department of Health, which is Indiana's lead agency on COVID-19, has the latest information about the virus. The best approach is to use fundamental healthy practices, such as washing your hands, covering your mouth with your arm or a tissue rather than your hand, staying home when you are ill, and practice social distancing with others.

Maintaining required court operations is important to us. The health and safety of our employees and community are equally important. Therefore, Tippecanoe County courts are adjusting the way we operate.

Our County has just announced the first presumptive positive of COVID-19 of a citizen and as of this notice, there are 56 confirmed cases in the State. This has caused us to announce that the Tippecanoe County Courts will be open only for essential business.

Emergency Relief Order Granted. The Indiana Supreme Court has approved the local Judges' request for emergency relief per Indiana Administrative Rule 17. The Order is effective March 16, 2020. (*See the attached Order.*) The Order allows courts, among other things, to suspend all criminal and civil jury trials, including those with "speedy trial" requests and all non-essential civil and criminal cases through May 4, 2020.

Courts will remain open and available to address necessary, essential, and emergency cases related to:

- *quarantine/isolation;*
- *protection orders;*
- *emergency custody or guardianship;*
- *emergency injunctive relief;*
- *civil commitments;*
- *firearm seizures;*
- *juvenile detentions;*
- *criminal initial hearings if defendant is in custody;*

- *criminal bail review;*
- *criminal pretrial, guilty plea, or sentencing hearings that may resolve a case or result in release from custody; and*
- *other emergency matters as determined in the discretion of the presiding judge.*

The Order further allows the courts, in their discretion and subject to constitutional limitations, to limit spectators (except parties, attorneys, witnesses, and victims of a case) in courtrooms and others inside the courthouse to the extent necessary to provide adequate social distancing. The Courts can also exclude spectators from the jail courtroom and gallery area inside the Tippecanoe County Jail to reduce risk of exposure inside the jail.

Courthouse Employees. All Court staff should maintain in contact with their direct supervisor for instruction, which may include working remotely if appropriate.

Jury Duty. Individuals who have received a jury summons for any trial up to May 4, 2020 should NOT come to the courthouse as they have been cancelled.

Litigants/Parties to a Case. Individuals who are scheduled to come to court for a through **May 4, 2020** may find that the hearing is cancelled. If you are represented by an attorney, you should contact your attorney as soon as possible to determine whether you should appear. If you are not represented by an attorney, you may check the status of your case on mycase.in.gov. or call your Court at the numbers below.

Attorneys. Lawyers who are scheduled to appear through **May 4, 2020** should check the status of your case electronically or by calling the Court. If you believe your appearance or the appearance of your client would present a health risk, you should request a continuance as soon as possible or file a notice of remote appearance.

E-filing and Odyssey. Indiana's e-filing system is working. Cases and documents can continue to be filed through the statewide system and Tippecanoe County Court will continue to process matters through this system during this time.

The statewide case management system (Odyssey) is working. Litigants, attorneys, press, and public can continue to view case information on mycase.in.gov.

Jail. The County courts are working with the County Sheriff to ensure public safety. Anyone arrested or defendants already in jail will continue to be processed as usual. All questions regarding jail operations and visitation should be directed to Sheriff Goldsmith at 765-423-9388

Juvenile Facility. Tippecanoe Superior Court III runs the Tippecanoe County Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center. Access to the intake center is limited to a single designated entry. Non-essential persons are not permitted to enter the intake center.

Probation and Court Ordered Services. Tippecanoe County courts run the County Probation Department. Any person on adult probation who has an in-office appointment up through **May 1, 2020** should call your probation officer to reschedule that appointment to a time after **May**

4, 2020. **** All probationers are advised they must still strictly comply with all terms of probation, including appearing for personal drug testing when required to do so.**** For questions regarding Court Services obligations, please call Court Services at 765-423-1172.

CASA Volunteers. CASA Volunteers should remain in contact with the CASA Office regarding the status of cases before the Court.

Court Ordered Mediation Through Alternative Dispute Resolution. Court ordered mediations through the ADR Program shall be conducted by telephone (not in person) through May 4, 2020 or continued. Please call your mediator or the ADR coordinator to arrange.

The Tippecanoe County courts remain committed to working with local emergency management, health departments, government leaders, and local attorneys to ensure we are taking the necessary steps in response to the virus for the safety and protection of the community.

Media with questions should be directed to Steve Meyer, Judge of Superior Court 2, 765-423-9312, smeyer@tippecanoe.in.gov

Approved by Consent of all Tippecanoe County Judicial Officers:

Sean Persin, Circuit Court (765-423-9343)
Randy Williams, Superior Court 1 (765-423-9217)
Steven Meyer, Superior Court 2 (765-423-9293)
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