

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF BOONE
COUNTY OF WINNEBAGO

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-28
TEMPORARY ORDER - COVID-19 PROCEDURE

This order supersedes Administrative Order 2020-22 entered on July 23, 2020.

Whereas the Circuit Court, pursuant to the Supreme Court's order of March 17, 2020, in M.R. 30370, previously reduced its operations to essential activities;

Whereas, the Supreme Court's order of May 20, 2020, in M.R. 30370, allows circuits to adopt their own plans for a resumption of court activity, and this Circuit did so effective June 1, 2020, as provided in Administrative Order 2020-21 entered on May 21, 2020;

Whereas, the Supreme Court's order of May 20, 2020, in M.R. 30370, implicitly allows circuits to step back from their reopening plans as dictated by local conditions;

It is therefore ORDERED that, effective immediately, the following procedures are in effect in the 17th Judicial Circuit:

1. **Masks / Face Coverings.** Pursuant to General Order 1.03, all persons, including attorneys, must wear a mask or face covering in public areas of the courthouse. This provision does not apply to any person who is: under age 2; incapacitated; having trouble breathing; or unable to remove the mask or face covering without assistance. Persons required to speak in the course of a court proceeding may be directed to remove a mask or face covering when speaking if necessary to make a record.
2. **Reduced Call Size.** In order to reduce the number of people in the building(s), the Court will, to the extent possible, reduce the number of cases slotted for each court call. This will in many instances require staggered court times. Attorneys are reminded that it is essential that they appear at the designated time in order to make this process work.
3. **Represented Parties Excused.** Unless ordered by the judge or directed by their attorney, parties in civil and family cases are strongly encouraged not to attend routine court hearings. Attorneys should advise their clients not to attend court unless their attendance is strictly necessary given the nature of the hearing at issue. In criminal cases, judges should discuss with the attorneys whether the defendant's presence might be excused.
4. **Additional Persons Discouraged.** Litigants are strongly discouraged from bringing any other person with them to the courthouse.
5. **Virtual Proceedings.** The Court will operate with increased reliance on virtual proceedings and hearings pursuant to Supreme Court Rules 45 and 241. Attorneys and parties who are offered the opportunity to appear virtually are strongly encouraged to do so. Those participating in a virtual hearing should plan to timely appear as scheduled and should become familiar with the evolving protocols at <https://tinyurl.com/IL17thVC>.

6. **Bench Warrants and Defaults.** Judges may refrain, in appropriate circumstances, from the issuance of bench warrants or the entry of default judgments. Individual judges may, based on the nature of the hearing, the case, and their call, be more flexible in excusing the appearance of a party or defendant.
7. **Jury Trials.** Effective November 23, 2020, and until February 1, 2021, no jury trials may proceed in the 17th Judicial Circuit Court. Dates set for jury trial on any judge's calendar falling prior to February 1, 2021, remain on the judge's calendar at the judge's discretion, but they may not proceed to trial. Pursuant to the Supreme Court's order, in criminal trials the period of delay shall not be attributable to either the State or the defendant for purpose of 725 ILCS 5/103-5.
8. **Alternate Court Spaces.** The following will be utilized as alternate court spaces:
 - a. In Winnebago County, the County Board Room, Winnebago County Courthouse, 400 West State Street, 8th Floor, Rockford, Illinois 61101.
 - b. In Boone County, Community Building Complex of Boone County, 111 West 1st Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008.
9. **Individual Judge/Division Order.** Attorneys and parties should be aware that individual judges and/or divisions may issue their own guidance on practices in certain courtrooms.

ENTER: _____



Eugene G. Doherty, Chief Judge

DATED: _____

11/17/20