

TAYLOR COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

ORDER REGARDING TEMPORARY EMERGENCY MEASURES **(Amended May 4, 2020)**

The Taylor County Circuit Court hereby issues the following order to provide procedures to address court proceedings and functions of the court system in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic of COVID-19 due to widespread human infection worldwide. On March 13, 2020, Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency in Wisconsin, and subsequently extended and modified said emergency order to continue “stay at home,” but also to gradually re-open the state;

WHEREAS, this court is monitoring the situation and is committed to public access to the court system and service provided by its essential functions and operations, while at the same time seeking to mitigate the exposure of the COVID-19 to litigants, judges, court staff, court security, attorneys, jurors, other participants in court proceedings, and all other person using court facilities;

WHEREAS, the Taylor County Circuit Court remains open for public business and access at this time;

WHEREAS, the technology and electronic means for video and audio remote communications have been implemented; and said means provides for court hearings to be conducted and also reduces the risk of the spread of the virus, and that said means can and have been used effectively for essential and non-essential hearings;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the court will continue to hear all essential hearings by remote technology unless it is impossible to provide due process, and effective May 18, 2020, the court will hear all types of hearings, except for jury trials, provided that all non-essential hearings can be conducted effectively by remote means. Essential matters are defined as follows:

1. Bail hearings for criminal cases to be scheduled at a reasonable time after detention
2. Preliminary hearings in criminal matters in which time requirements are applicable
3. Juvenile detention hearings and child welfare hearings including TPC hearings as required by statute
4. Chapter 51 commitment hearings within statutory time limits
5. Guardianship and protective placement hearings within statutory time limits
6. Criminal competency to proceed matters for those held in custody
7. Treatment court review hearings
8. Restraining order hearings within the statutory time frames

9. Termination of parental rights hearings and adoption hearings within statutory time periods
10. Temporary custody hearings and contempt hearings at discretion of the court and the Family Court Commissioner
11. Any other type of hearing for which cause for timeliness has been shown such that the risk of exposure to the virus is overcome.

Nothing in this order shall be construed to contradict the Supreme Court's directives regarding jury trials.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that hearings will be conducted by telephone, video conference and alternative means of communication in order to reduce face-to-face contact, as appropriate and as provided by law. If a non-essential hearing cannot be conducted remotely, it will be rescheduled. Persons wishing to contact the court can call 715-748-1435. Social distancing practices and reasonable preventative measures shall be used if personal appearances are made. Furthermore, the court shall consider requests for adjournments and continuances in a liberal fashion within the requirements of the law in order to facilitate the purpose of reducing in-person contact.

Dated this 4th day of May, 2020.

BY THE COURT:



Ann N. Knox-Bauer
Taylor County Circuit Court Judge