



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

District of Minnesota

John R. Tunheim, Chief Judge

Kate Fogarty, Clerk

Warren E. Burger Federal
Building and U.S. Courthouse
316 North Robert Street
Suite 100
St. Paul, MN 55101
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Diana E. Murphy U.S.
Courthouse
300 South Fourth Street
Suite 202
Minneapolis, MN 55415
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Gerald W. Heaney Federal Building
and U.S. Courthouse and Customhouse
515 West First Street
Suite 417
Duluth, MN 55802
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Edward J. Devitt U.S.
Courthouse and Federal Building
118 South Mill Street
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April 15, 2020

NEWS RELEASE

United States District Court for the District of Minnesota COVID-19 Updates

Minneapolis, MN – In its continued effort to reduce courthouse visitors, while providing access to justice during the emergency created by the COVID-19 outbreak, the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota has made significant advancements in the Court’s ability to resume court proceedings in a remote environment. On March 27, 2020, the President signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, which has permitted the Court to utilize videoconferencing for federal criminal proceedings, except for jury trials. On March 29, 2020, the Judicial Conference of the United States made the necessary finding under the CARES Act that COVID-19 emergency conditions have materially affected and will materially affect the functioning of the federal courts. This finding paved the way for video conferencing criminal proceedings.

The District of Minnesota’s goal is to utilize videoconferencing to the greatest extent possible under the CARES Act and is now prepared to start hearing criminal proceedings using video or audio conferencing. In addition, dates set by earlier Court orders needed to be extended to comply with direction from state and federal authorities. Today, Chief Judge John Tunheim issued General Order No. 9 on behalf of the Court, which provides that the Court will begin video and audio proceedings in criminal cases and gives the following direction:

- a. All criminal proceedings that cannot be conducted using videoconferencing, or telephone conferencing if videoconferencing is not reasonably available, or when the defendant has not consented to video or audio conference, are suspended until May 17, 2020 unless excepted by the presiding judge.
- b. All jury trials are suspended until June 14, 2020.
- c. Grand jury proceedings are suspended until further order of the Court.

- d. All Central Violations Bureau or petty offense hearings are suspended until May 17, 2020.
- e. All civil hearings that cannot be conducted using videoconference or telephone conference, or cannot be resolved on the briefs, are suspended through May 17, 2020, unless excepted by the presiding judge.
- f. The Clerk's Office intake counters located in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Fergus Falls will remain closed to the public until May 17, 2020. The Clerk's Office remains open to assist attorneys and the public by telephone, email, and online chat from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. The Clerk's Office will continue to accept electronic filings in civil and criminal cases through electronic case filing system (CM/ECF) and online payments through www.pay.gov. The Clerk's Office will continue to accept filings and payments by check and money order through the U.S. Mail.

Please review the attached order for more specific details: https://www.mnd.uscourts.gov/sites/mnd/files/2020-0415_COVID-19-General-Order-No9.pdf.

The Court continues to monitor the most current statements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as all communications disseminated by the Administrative Office of the U. S. Courts (AO), regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Court is following recommended guidelines from public health officials and preparedness guidance from the AO, including cancelling or postponing all non-essential events and travel, increasing sanitation efforts in all courtrooms and public spaces, and increasing remote working options for staff.

Additional questions can be directed to Media Coordinator, Rebecca Parks at Rebecca.Parks@mnd.uscourts.gov.

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