

IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

SPECIAL ORDER

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, certain emergency actions are required and will be immediately implemented until further notice by the Court.

Pursuant to the Emergency Administrative Orders by the Supreme Court of Mississippi dated 03/13/2020 and 03/15/2020, all state courts will remain open for business to ensure courts fulfill their constitutional and statutory duties and will continue normal business as much as possible. No gatherings in excess of 50 people will be allowed for the next eight (8) weeks, and the Court will avoid any proceedings that involve vulnerable persons or require witnesses or parties to travel from an infected area.

As presiding Judge, I have the absolute discretion to control all dockets in this Court, and out of an abundance of caution, I am hereby postponing all scheduled trials until at least April 15, 2020.

It is the opinion of the Court, that the issuance of warrants, initial appearances, arraignments, and certain hearings are deemed essential proceedings and can continue under limited conditions to the safest extent possible. The Court will address these essential proceedings on a case-by-case method starting next Monday, March 23, 2020, via telephone, videoconference, facetime, or face-to-face with the glass barrier located at the Municipal Court, or as a last resort, in one of the available courtrooms. Starting today, the Court will immediately contact all affected parties and reset the matters as appropriate.

The Court also encourages any accused person who desires to plea guilty to a charge that requires only the payment of fine, to make payment through the Court's drive-through window, drop box, or pay electronically on the Court's website.

All Court proceedings will be limited to attorneys, parties, witnesses, security officers, and other necessary parties, as determined by the Judge.

For all proceedings, attorneys must notify the Court if that attorney or any individual that attorney intends to bring to the Court have any of the following risk factors:

1. Persons who have traveled abroad within the last 14 days.
2. Persons who have traveled within the last 14 days to any location within the U.S. with known outbreaks.
3. Persons who reside or have had close contact with someone who has traveled abroad or to a location with a known outbreak within the last 14 days.
4. Persons who a doctor, hospital, health agency, or their employment has asked to self-quarantine.
5. Persons who have been diagnosed with or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
6. Persons with fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
7. Persons who will be required to fly for the scheduled proceeding.
8. Any other person who would raise a reasonable concern for exposure.

Attorneys must contact persons they wish to bring to the Court and ask whether they have the above risk factors. *(It is noted that this requirement may not be possible for initial appearances, arraignments, and related proceedings.)* If determined by the attorney a risk factor may exist, the attorney is to give the Court notice as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours before the proceeding.

All pre-trial detainees must be taken by the Oxford Police Department (OPD) to the Lafayette County Detention Center for medical screening before appearing in Court. OPD shall notify the Judge before transport to the courthouse if the detainee exhibits any risk factors.

OPD shall have the authority to screen any visitor to the Court. OPD is directed to prepare recommended best practices for screening visitors and is hereby authorized to implement those procedures once developed. If an individual is suspected of having a risk of contamination, OPD must notify the Court.

SO ORDERED, this the 16th day of March, 2020.


MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE