

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI
16TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, STATE OF MISSOURI

In Re: Updated Court Operations under Supreme Court Operational Directives
- Effective February 15, 2021
Eastern Jackson County Courthouse to operate at Phase 3
Kansas City Courthouse to operate at Phase 3
Family Justice Center to Operate at Phase 3
Albert Riederer Community Justice Complex to Operate at Phase 3
Municipal Court facilities to operate at Phase 1, 2, or 3

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2021-024

WHEREAS, during the emergence of COVID-19, it has been and continues to be imperative that all appropriate steps be taken by the 16th Judicial Circuit (Court) to protect the health and safety of all Court employees, judicial officers, attorneys, litigants, victims, witnesses, prospective jurors, members of the general public, and any other individuals or entities who have cases and hearings pending in the Court and/or have business with the Court; and

WHEREAS, while giving full consideration to the concerns stated above, the Court has also consistently considered the performance of its constitutional duties as the judicial branch of government, considering and balancing the rights of all parties and litigants to have their cases, hearings, disputes and matters heard and adjudicated; and

WHEREAS, as a result of and in response to the spread of COVID-19, various executive orders and emergency orders from all levels of government have previously been issued which closed or limited certain governmental functions and which closed certain aspects of society and communities. However, said Orders also provided that Court operations were deemed to be essential governmental services and, therefore, the Court remained open and operational during the term of said Orders, performing core judicial functions, often through remote technologies including video and telephone hearings and conferences; and

WHEREAS, the previously entered executive Orders and emergency Orders have been lifted or terminated and/or have been replaced with Orders allowing for the phased re-opening of society, businesses, communities and the courthouses in which the Court operates, while also including continued restrictions to minimize the spread of COVID- 19; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the lifting, termination or modification of previous executive and emergency Orders and the phased re-opening of society, businesses and government, social distancing guidelines remain in effect, which guidelines recommend, suggest or require a minimum separation distance of 6 feet between people as a way to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus; and

WHEREAS, the Missouri Supreme Court has issued several Orders and related Operational Directives regarding court operations which include strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and directives which provide for a phased approach toward easing restrictions related to court operations and expanding court operations; and

WHEREAS, on July 24, 2020, the Missouri Supreme Court issued its most recent Order with Operational Directives. Among other provisions, the July 24, 2020 Operational Directives allows a presiding judge to “change [the] Operating Phase for each court facility [within a circuit] in which judicial functions are carried out”; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the Court continuing a deliberate plan moving toward more complete court operations pursuant to Missouri Supreme Court Orders, the Court’s operations continue to be modified; and

WHEREAS, circumstances regarding COVID-19 continue to evolve and change, frequently on a daily or weekly basis; and

WHEREAS, the Missouri Supreme Court has continued to authorize the Presiding Judge of each Circuit to facilitate local solutions regarding the continuation and/or restoration of court operations, while also considering and maintaining a certain degree of uniformity; and

WHEREAS, the Missouri Supreme Court has continued to encourage judges to utilize all available technologies – including teleconferencing and video conferencing – to limit in person courtroom appearances to the extent not prohibited by the constitution or statutes as to the proceedings; and

WHEREAS, the Missouri Supreme Court’s Operational Directives describe criteria to be evaluated and considered regarding the continued operation of the Court as well as the progression or regression to different Phases set forth in the Operating Directives, all of which have been duly considered in the entry of this Administrative Order; and

WHEREAS, the Court operates in numerous buildings and courthouses, including the Kansas City Courthouse, the Eastern Jackson County Courthouse, the Family Justice Center and the Albert Riederer Community Justice Complex (herein collectively

referred to as “Court Buildings”) and various municipal courts in different cities and various buildings throughout the Circuit (herein referred to as “Municipal Courts”); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 478.240.2 R.S.Mo. and Section 15 of the Missouri Constitution, the Presiding Judge has general administrative authority over all judicial personnel and court officials in the Circuit as well as administrative authority over dockets of the Court and the administrative and discretionary authority regarding the manner in which any hearings are conducted in the Court.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, effective February 15, 2021 and continuing until rescinded, amended, modified or extended in a subsequent Administrative Order, as follows:

1. The Court will follow the Operational Directives and criteria set forth by the Missouri Supreme Court as it works toward restoration of complete court operations, including the utilization of local solutions appropriate to local conditions.

2. The Court will submit to the Missouri Supreme Court in a regular and timely manner, “Exhibit A, Notice to the Supreme Court of Missouri of Higher/Lower Operating Phase” as set forth in and referenced in the Supreme Court’s Order dated July 24, 2020. The Court will follow the applicable guidelines and directives for the Phase specified in its submitted Exhibit A, supplemented by the specific terms of this Administrative Order and any amendments hereto. To the extent this Administrative Order provides local solutions or additional terms unique to the local conditions presented to the Court, those solutions and terms shall continue to apply until rescinded or modified by a subsequent Administrative Order.

3. Effective February 15, 2021, the Court will operate at the following phases of the Missouri Supreme Court’s Operational Directives:

- A. Kansas City Courthouse – Phase 3;
- B. Eastern Jackson County Courthouse – Phase 3;
- C. Family Justice Center – Phase 3;
- D. Albert Riederer Community Justice Complex – Phase 3;
- E. Municipal Courts within the Circuit – Phase 1, Phase 2, or Phase 3, pursuant to circumstances unique to each Municipal Court.

4. For Municipal Courts operating in Phase 1, 2, or 3, the Court shall continue to utilize all available technologies, including teleconferencing and video conferencing, to the greatest possible extent for all proceedings, hearings and/or conferences (collectively referred hereinafter as “proceedings”) so as to minimize, as much as possible, the physical presence of persons in Court Buildings or Municipal Courts for in person proceedings.

5. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 4 above, for Municipal Courts operating in Phase 1 or 2, in person proceedings *may occur but in limited and extreme circumstances* for critical proceedings in extraordinary and urgent situations, based on a determination that alternative methods for conducting said proceedings cannot occur, including a determination by the Judicial Officer presiding over any such proceedings that it is not possible for such proceedings to be conducted by telephone, teleconference, polycom, videoconferencing, or any other method that does not require the physical presence of persons in Court Buildings or Municipal Courts. *In person hearings may be conducted* when other alternative methods to proceed have failed or are otherwise not available.

6. The Court Administrator has previously established procedures for pro se litigants to deliver and/or file pleadings and other documents with the Court via fax filing, email filing, and by creating drop boxes at designated entries to Court Buildings. Those procedures are posted on Court Building doors, posted on the Court's website at www.16thcircuit.org and posted on the Court's Facebook page. Those procedures shall remain in place as alternatives to pro se litigants filing said documents personally at the courthouses. Municipal Courts should develop similar procedures for pro se litigants.

7. In all criminal cases where the defendant is in detention at the Jackson County Detention Center ("JCDC") or otherwise in custody at any other detention center or at any other prison:

A. Said defendant shall be personally transported to Court Buildings for voir dire, jury trial, and bench trial, thereby allowing said defendant to be personally present in the courtroom for such voir dire, jury trial, and bench trial;

B. Said defendant shall be personally transported to Court Buildings or Municipal Courts for any hearing or conference where the defendant's personal presence in the courtroom is required by statute, rule or constitutional provision;

C. Said defendant shall *not* be personally transported to or brought into Court Buildings or Municipal Courts for any hearing, conference or proceeding other than those specifically identified in paragraphs A and B above. All hearings and conferences other than those specifically identified above in paragraphs A and B shall be conducted via teleconference or videoconference, including but not limited to initial appearance, arraignment hearings and pre-trial hearings/conferences.

8. Each Judicial Officer and his/her division staff shall be responsible for notifying all parties and counsel if his/her cases/dockets are being conducted by teleconference, videoconference or the manner in which hearings will be held. Each Judicial Officer and his/her division staff shall also be responsible for re-scheduling new hearing dates and notifying all parties and counsel of new hearing dates in the event cases cannot be heard as scheduled.

9. The Court has been and will continue to schedule in person hearings on full orders of protection. The Court has and will continue to add dockets, if necessary, for conducting said hearings, subject to social distancing requirements, limitations on the size of gatherings as set forth

in the applicable Operational Directives and other limitations set forth in this Administrative Order. Any in person hearings on full orders of protection that were previously continued by prior Administrative Orders and have not yet been heard, will be re-scheduled by the Court and if possible, given priority regarding hearing dates. Given the previous suspension of hearings and the resulting delays, all Ex Parte Orders of Protection currently in existence will be extended by operation of this Administrative Order until the full order of protection hearing can be scheduled and actually occurs.

With the addition of dockets for Order of Protection cases, the Court is close to resolving all backlogs of said cases. However, if any Ex Parte Orders of Protection entered subsequent to this Administrative Order are not able to be heard within 14 days of the entry of the Ex Parte Order, the Ex Parte Order will be extended by operation of this Administrative Order until a full order of protection hearing can be scheduled and actually occurs.

Nothing in this Administrative Order bars or prevents holding hearings on full orders of protection via teleconference or videoconference. Therefore, if all parties in a particular case are available to allow said hearing to be conducted via teleconference or videoconference, said hearing shall proceed in that manner.

10. When a defendant in a pending criminal case bonds out of JCDC, he/she is given a date for his/her initial appearance. Any such date provided to a defendant shall be continued and the initial appearance will be held 30 days after the date provided at the time the defendant bonds out of JCDC.

11. While this Administrative Order remains in effect, judges presiding over a civil or domestic case or matter may exercise their discretion to waive, for good cause shown, any filing deadlines or time limitations set through Missouri's e-filing system or by court order, local rule, or Missouri Supreme Court Rules 41 through 81. This authorization does not apply to any deadline or time limitations set by statute or constitutional provision.

12. The Court Administrator/Deputy Court Administrator will continue to provide programming operated by the Family Court Services, *provided however*, that said programming can proceed in compliance with the Operational Directives, social distancing requirements, limitations on sizes of gatherings, other terms of this Administrative Order and guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

13. All Municipal Courts in Jackson County, Missouri are subject to this Administrative Order and are encouraged to take appropriate action consistent with this Administrative Order and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Many Municipal Courts in Jackson County, Missouri operate in facilities that are not specifically dedicated to court operations, but rather are shared with different government offices and facilities, many of which operate under different and occasionally more restrictive guidelines and protocols. Therefore, Municipal Courts shall have the discretion to determine the level of court operations they can attain under the unique, specific circumstances presented and applicable to each such court.

14. The provision of Circuit Court Local Rule 68.3.1 which requires that each party be represented by separate counsel, shall remain temporarily suspended. Therefore, assuming all other requirements of Local Rule 68 are complied with, proposed Judgments may be submitted by Affidavit and entered by the Court when only one party is represented by counsel instead of the

requirement that both parties be represented by counsel. All other terms of Local Rule 68 remain in effect.

15. All nonessential court related travel for staff and judicial officers shall continue to remain suspended.

16. All Court staff and all members of the public who appear at any Court Building or Municipal Court for hearings and/or to conduct any court-related business, shall comply with all screening requirements and/or other requirements to mitigate against the spread of COVID-19 which are imposed at all Court Buildings and Municipal Courts, including but not limited to temperature checks and medical screenings in order to enter any Court Building, wearing masks or other face coverings as a condition to enter any Court Building or Municipal Court, wearing masks or other face coverings in all public areas in all Court Buildings and Municipal Courts and social distancing.

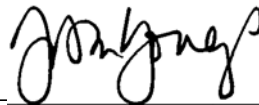
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that to the extent the directives and declarations set forth in this Administrative Order differ from prior Administrative Orders, this Administrative Order controls, PROVIDED, that Administrative Order 2021-004, suspending jury trials through February 28, 2021, shall remain in effect in accordance with its terms.

THIS ORDER MAY BE AMENDED, RESCINDED, MODIFIED OR EXTENDED AS CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

February 11, 2021

Date



J. Dale Youngs, Presiding Judge

Certificate of Service

This is to certify that a copy of the foregoing was emailed to the following on February 11, 2021:

Missouri Supreme Court

16th Circuit Court Judiciary and Staff

Frank White, County Executive

Troy Schulte, County Administrator

Darryl Forte, Sheriff

Captain Dale Covey, Jackson County Sheriff's Department

Mary A. Marquez, Court Administrator

Jean Peters-Baker, Jackson County Prosecutor

Ruth Petsch, District Defender, Office of the Public Defender

All Municipal Courts

Bar Associations located within the 16th Judicial Circuit

**16TH JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT STATE OF
MISSOURI**

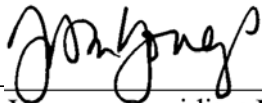
Notice to the Supreme Court of Missouri of Higher/Lower Operating Phase

I, J. Dale Youngs, Presiding Judge of the 16th Judicial Circuit Court, hereby notify the Supreme Court of Missouri that effective February 15, 2021, the 16th Judicial Circuit will be operating under the terms of the following Phases of the Supreme Court's Operational Directives, including the utilization of local solutions applicable to local conditions as set forth in this Court's Administrative Order 2021-024, effective February 15, 2021.

Kansas City Courthouse – Phase 3;
Eastern Jackson County Courthouse – Phase 3;
Family Justice Center – Phase 3;
Albert Riederer Community Justice Complex – Phase 3;
Municipal Courts within the Circuit – Phase 1, Phase 2, or Phase 3,
pursuant to circumstances unique to each Municipal Court.

February 11, 2021

Date



J. Dale Youngs, Presiding Judge