

THIRTY-FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

PARISH OF GRANT

STATE OF LOUISIANA

ORDER RE: COURTHOUSE ACCESS DURING COVID-19

PHASE TWO

Acting under the authority of Article V, Section 1 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, and the inherent power of this Court, considering the current spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Grant Parish, Louisiana, and Governor John Bel Edwards' declaration of a public health emergency in Proclamation Number 74 JBE 2020 entitled "State of Emergency for Covid-19 Phase 2 of Resilient Louisiana; the Louisiana Supreme Court's Orders of April 6, 2020, April 22, 2020, April 29, 2020, May 15, 2020, and June 5, 2020; and in consideration of public health recommendations to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus and slow the spread of the disease while balancing the need to maintain access to Louisiana courts;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Supreme Court has ordered that civil and criminal jury trials are suspended through June 30, 2020;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Supreme Court has further ordered that courts must continue to take measures to limit access to courtrooms and other spaces, with absolute minimum physical contact, to practice social distancing and limit in-person court capacity to 50% of the total capacity, as determined by the State Fire Marshal;

WHEREAS, in accordance with Proclamation Number 74 JBE 2020, State of Emergency for Covid-19 Phase 2, which provides that all critical infrastructure and essential businesses as outlined in version 3.1 of the guidance from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), which includes the Court, Clerk of Court, District Attorney, and Policy Jury may remain in full operation, subject to the safety recommendations contained therein;

WHEREAS to ensure the safety and health of both the employees and public accessing the Courthouse, the Jury will provide personnel to monitor admission to the Courthouse and increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of restrooms, doors, handrails, and other commonly touched areas within the Courthouse;

WHEREAS this Order is intended to address admission into the Courthouse building; each agency or official located within the Courthouse shall have the authority to determine the extent of public access into each office. Furthermore, this Order is intended to clarify conditions related to the public's admission into the courthouse. It is not intended to expand the types or methods of court proceedings which may be held under the Louisiana Supreme Court Orders dated April 6, 2020, April 22, 2020, April 29, 2020, May 15, 2020 or June 5, 2020;

Based upon the foregoing,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that beginning May 18, 2020, there will be restricted access by the public to the Courthouse in accordance with the following:

Individuals who have been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus or who have had close contact with a person with the COVID-19 virus within the last 14 days; persons who have been instructed to quarantine by a health care professional; and persons who are experiencing coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, muscle pain, or headache are prohibited from entering the courthouse.

If a person has business with the court or another agency located within the courthouse that requires an in-person appearance, such persons must enter the courthouse building through the front entrance. Upon entering the building, each individual will be checked for fever, and questioned regarding any COVID-19 symptoms or contact with COVID-19 positive individuals. At no time shall the number of people admitted into the courthouse building exceed 50% of the total capacity, as determined by the State Fire Marshal. Only

the party having business within the courthouse and any necessary witnesses shall be permitted entry.

If granted admission to the courthouse, each person must:

- * maintain at least six feet distance from any other person at all times
- *wear a mask covering the nose and mouth at all times. Consent to remove the mask while testifying in court may be granted or required by the Court or other agency official
- *avoid handing any type of material or object to another person

Any person who has been diagnosed with a condition that places them at risk of being susceptible to the COVID-19 virus is encouraged not to enter the courthouse building. Rather, such individuals are encouraged to contact the appropriate agency to see if their matter may be resolved by telephone, email, facsimile, or audio visual transmission. If you have been summoned to appear in court but feel that you are not permitted or should not enter the courthouse, you must contact the Judicial Administrator at (318) 627-3244 or judsec22@bellsouth.net at least 48 hours prior to the time you are scheduled to appear in court to discuss whether your appearance may be handled in a manner other than an in person appearance.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all pleadings, exhibits or other items should be mailed, faxed or submitted to the Clerk of Court prior to the hearing. In person filing or delivery of documents or exhibits will be permitted only in emergency situations, at the discretion of the Clerk of Court or Judge, as applicable.

The Court may issue further Orders regarding this matter as necessary to address the circumstances arising from this pandemic and will post such Orders on the Court's website at www.35jdc.com and the Louisiana Supreme Court's website at www.lasc.org.

The Court reserves the right to modify these provisions as circumstances and the needs of justice require.

Thus done and signed in Colfax, Grant Parish, this 16th day of June, 2020.

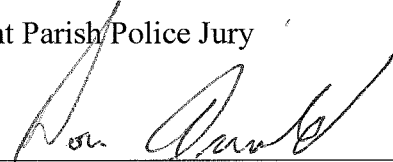


Warren D. Willett, Judge
35th Judicial District Court

Approved:

Grant Parish Police Jury

By:



Don Arnold, President