



Orleans Parish Juvenile Court
1100-B Milton Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70122

CHIEF JUDGE

CANDICE BATES ANDERSON

TELEPHONE (504) 658-9500

FAX (504) 658-9556

JUDGES

ERNESTINE S. GRAY

MARK DOHERTY

TAMMY M. STEWART

DESIREE COOK-CALVIN

March 13, 2020

Re: Coronavirus

Orleans Parish Juvenile Court (OPJC) will remain open and adhere to the policies that have been adopted by the Louisiana Supreme Court for all courts throughout the State of Louisiana. We have attached the written policy signed by Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette J. Johnson.

Thanks you,

Candice Bates Anderson



Supreme Court

STATE OF LOUISIANA
New Orleans

CHIEF JUSTICE

BERNETTE J. JOHNSON

JUSTICES

WILLIAM J. CRAIN

SCOTT J. CRICHTON

JAMES T. GENOVESE

MARCUS R. CLARK

JEFFERSON D. HUGHES III

JOHN L. WEIMER

Seventh District

First District

Second District

Third District

Fourth District

Fifth District

Sixth District

JOHN TARLTON OLIVIER
CLERK OF COURT

400 ROYAL STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70130

TELEPHONE (504) 310-2300
HOME PAGE <http://www.lasc.org>

March 12, 2020

Dear Chief Judges:

Both the Center for Disease Control and the Louisiana Department of Health have advised people to take precautions in light of the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) outbreak, and Governor John Bel Edwards has declared a public health emergency. In light of these developments, I wanted to assure you that we are monitoring the situation closely and we offer the following advice and recommendations.

First and foremost, we must handle this public health crisis in a way that protects the health and safety of everyone at our court facilities, while at the same time, to the extent possible, maintains access to the courts. In meeting these strategic goals, the courts are strongly encouraged to implement social distancing strategies to slow and possibly prevent exposure of the COVID-19 virus. As such, our courts are strongly encouraged to:

- Restrict court settings to emergency and time-sensitive settings;
- Stagger the scheduling of dockets to reduce the number of people in a space at the same time;
- Stagger essential court staff in attendance for court hearings to limit the pooling of people unnecessarily in a space at the same time;
- Encourage employees that can work remotely from home to do so; and

March 12, 2020

- Expand the use of audio and/or video conferencing in meeting, discovery conferences, scheduling conferences, bail settings, first appearance settings (where possible) hearings on post-convictions (to reduce unnecessary travel on detention centers and inmates).

Minimizing the number of people entering the courts is essential to slowing and preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus outbreak. While you are in the best position to know what is optimal for your court, we recommend that all civil and criminal hearings and jury trials be continued, if possible, except as determined by the courts in regards to cases where speedy-trial motions have been filed in pre-trial detained individuals' cases to avoid violation of any constitutional rights. You may also wish to consider reducing the size of your jury pools for the time being.

Attached is an initial communication that we forwarded to our employees. For your information, the Louisiana Supreme Court will remain open for filings and other court business, while allowing non-essential employees to work remotely. Oral arguments scheduled for next week will be rescheduled. My "State of the Judiciary" address and reception, previously set for Tuesday, March 17, 2020, will also be rescheduled. If you adopt any orders affecting your court, please email them to us at rgunn@lasc.org so we may post them on the Supreme Court website.

We will be posting information and resources on the Supreme Court website at www.lasc.org. In addition, attached are some sample court Orders and notices. Additional resources are below:

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) | Department of Health | State of Louisiana

<http://ldh.la.gov/coronavirus/>

Preparing for a Pandemic: An Emergency Response Benchbook and Operational Guidebook for State Court Judges and Administrators - Courthouse Facilities - National Center for State Courts

<https://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/facilities/id/194/>

Coronavirus Information | Office of Governor John Bel Edwards

<https://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/89>

Page 3
March 12, 2020

Gov. Edwards Declares Public Health Emergency in Response to COVID-19 |
Office of Governor John Bel Edwards

<https://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/2400>

Our collective cooperation and implementation of these recommendations are essential in slowing and preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus outbreak. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernette J. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bernette" and last name "Johnson" clearly distinguishable.

Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson

Attachments

cc: Justices
Judges
Court Administrators