



PRESS RELEASE

March 19, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: William Bland, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge
Elizabeth Heath, Chief District Court Judge
Justin Minshew, Wayne County Clerk of Court

UPDATED COURT SCHEDULE

Wayne County, NC - Pursuant to the ORDER OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA [under N.C.G.S. § 7A-39(b)(2)], the Wayne County Courthouse will suspend operation of our district and superior courts for 30 days, with some limited exceptions as follows:

- **CIVIL COURTS:** *Civil Superior Court* matters scheduled for March 30 will be rescheduled for April 27. *Civil District Court* non-jury matters scheduled for April 6 will be rescheduled for May 5. All *small claims* matters will be scheduled to a date after April 16. Matters noticed for *temporary restraining orders* and other *emergency matters* will be heard in the appropriate court.
- **CRIMINAL AND TRAFFIC COURT:** Cases affecting due process rights will be heard, including: *first appearances, probable cause hearings, preliminary hearings on probation violations, and bond motions*. Defendants with matters scheduled in *superior court* should remain on *telephone standby with their attorney* & be available to appear in court upon direction. Matters previously calendared for a special session of court will be heard. *Mt. Olive Criminal District Court* scheduled for March 27 has been cancelled, cases will be continued to a date after April 16. Matters scheduled for *Traffic Administrative Court* on March 20 and April 3 will be continued until after April 16. *Probationers should remain in contact with your probation officer* who will advise you as to whether your appearance in court is necessary. All other cases will be continued to a date after April 16, notice by mail will be sent to Defendants' last known address. New court dates may be found online at <https://www.nccourts.gov/court-dates>.
- **DOMESTIC AND FAMILY LAW MATTERS:** Parties should contact their attorneys regarding all domestic and family law matters including hearings for *divorce, child custody, alimony, etc.* All *child custody mediations, parenting education classes, and mediation orientation classes* have been continued to a date after April 16 and notices have been mailed to all parties containing the rescheduled dates. Parties seeking emergency relief under Chapters 50B (*Domestic Violence Protective Orders*) and 50C (*Civil No Contact Orders*) are asked to come to the Clerk's Office by 9:00 a.m. to have their request for ex parte relief heard by a judge. Parties to matters involving Domestic Violence Protective Orders or Civil No Contact Orders should appear in court as



scheduled. **Child Support Court** cases will be rescheduled until after April 16. Family Court Case Coordinators will communicate with attorneys to reschedule any non-essential matters. Unrepresented parties will be mailed notice of their rescheduled court date.

- **HEARINGS BEFORE THE CLERK:** Contact the Clerk of Superior Court Estate and Special Proceedings Division at (919) 722-6100 Ext. 4 regarding the status of the hearing.
- **JURY MATTERS:** *District and Superior Court Jury Trials* will be rescheduled until after April 16, jurors summoned for District or Superior Court trial weeks will not need to report for any sessions from the week of March 16th through the week of April 13th. **Grand Jury** members should contact the Grand Jury foreperson.
- **JUVENILE COURT:** *Delinquency court* will hold **secured custody hearings, first appearances,** and **probable cause hearings.** *DSS – abuse, neglect and dependency court* will conduct **non-secure custody hearings** as scheduled. All other hearings will be continued until after April 16. Family Court Case Coordinators will communicate with attorneys to reschedule any non-essential matters. Individuals who are not represented by an attorney should contact the Family Court Office at (919) 722-6255 or their assigned social workers to determine whether they should appear in court.

GENERAL TIPS FOR LAWYERS: Please plan to be present when court opens for the day. We will be operating on a limited schedule and will not hold matters open for attorneys. If you plan to request a probable cause hearing, please give the Office of the District Attorney ample notice.

GENERAL TIPS FOR THE PUBLIC: If you are a party who is represented by an attorney, please contact your attorney for scheduling information. If you are a victim or a witness for the state, contact the Office of the District Attorney. Individuals may also visit <https://www.nccourts.gov/court-dates> to obtain new court dates.

GENERAL TIPS FOR EVERYONE: If you have traveled out of the country in the past 14 days or have been exposed to someone who has traveled out of the country in the past 14 days; or if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for the virus; or if you have flu-like symptoms please do not come to the courthouse. Communicate your concern to the appropriate individuals listed above.

The court system remains open to process important documentation and information and to provide essential and required legal services, especially to those in the jail and to victims of violent crime.