

KENT COUNTY 63rd DISTRICT COURT *NEWS RELEASE*



1950 East Beltline Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525 616.632.7770

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 14, 2020

Contact: Hilary Arthur, Court Administrator hilary.arthur@kentcountymi.gov

KENT COUNTY – In light of the current state of emergency, Kent County 63rd District Court today announced it has implemented the following actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Chief Judge Jeffrey O’Hara and District Judge Sara Smolenski are closely monitoring this situation and will make any adjustments needed as this matter evolves.

- The court’s priority is the health of all staff and the public. The court is adjourning all but essential matters. There will be no in-person assistance at the front counter. Payments may be made at <https://www.accesskent.com/Courts/63dc/> or by mail to the court.
- Do not come to court but communicate with the court by phone if:
 - You are sick or experiencing flu-like symptoms.
 - You have been exposed to someone who is sick.
 - You have a compromised immune system or are otherwise vulnerable.
 - You have travelled internationally or domestically by air within the last 14 days.
- Encourage nonessential individuals to stay at home. If possible, the court can permit these individuals to listen to the court proceedings via phone or video.
- Persons who are not a party or necessary to a case should not enter the courthouse.
- In all matters, the court will utilize remote appearances to the greatest extent possible. To arrange, parties and attorneys should contact the court at DCCustomer@kentcountymi.gov
- **Criminal Matters:**
 - **Felony:** all felony arraignments, probable cause conferences and preliminary examinations will continue as scheduled. The court encourages all felony hearings to be conducted remotely. Attorneys should contact the court to arrange.
 - **Misdemeanors:**
 - Misdemeanor criminal trials are adjourned to a date after May 1, 2020. The court will send notice to appear.
 - Misdemeanor arraignments, pleas and sentencing hearings are adjourned to a date after May 1, 2020. The court will send a notice to appear. However, a

- defendant may request an earlier date to appear remotely by video. To arrange, contact the court at DCCriminal@kentcountymi.gov
- Misdemeanor pretrial conferences will be conducted remotely. For instructions, contact the court at DCCriminal@kentcountymi.gov
- **Show Cause Hearings** are adjourned to a date after May 1, 2020. The court will send a notice to appear for the rescheduled date.
- **Probation:** Probation meetings are by phone only. The probation department is modifying some activities and will contact anyone affected.
- **Civil Matters:**
 - All civil jury trials and bench trials; civil motions, mediations and other proceedings; small claims hearings; post-judgment collection discovery exams are adjourned to a date after May 1, 2020. The court will send all parties a notice with their rescheduled dates.
 - However, all pretrial conferences and settlement conferences are mandatory and remain as scheduled, to be conducted remotely with the court.
 - Pleadings must be mailed to the court with the filing fee.
- **Landlord-Tenant:** All existing summary proceeding (landlord-tenant) hearings and trials are adjourned to a date after May 1, 2020. The court will send a notice to appear for the rescheduled date. New cases will be set for hearing on or after May 1, 2020, except complaints alleging serious and continuing health hazard, etc., under MCL 600.5714(1)(d) which will be scheduled at the soonest available date. Parties with judgments of possession who are seeking court orders of eviction may file those requests and the court will act upon them. Persons objecting to an order of eviction may file a request to stay that eviction and a hearing will be scheduled at the earliest available date.
- **Traffic, Civil Infractions and Ordinance Violations:** All informal and formal hearings are adjourned to a date after May 1, 2020. The court will send all parties a notice with their rescheduled dates.
- **Weddings:** If you have a scheduled wedding, please contact the court for information. The court will not schedule any weddings until further notice.

Contact the court at DCCustomer@kentcountymi.gov for further information on your case.
Email is the fastest way to work with the court. Persons without access to email, call (616) 632-7770.

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