

Updated: March 17, 2020

The Minnesota Judicial Council, the policymaking body of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, held an emergency meeting on Friday, March 13, 2020, to discuss [Emergency Executive Order 20-01](#); Declaring a Peacetime Emergency and Coordinating Minnesota's Strategy to Protect Minnesotans from COVID-19. Following that meeting, Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea issued a [statewide order](#), effective Monday, March 16, 2020, for all Minnesota courts. The order establishes temporary procedures for district court case processing:

- All court facilities shall remain open. Service windows at court facilities will also remain open, and courts will continue to accept filings in all case types. The Judicial Branch discourages the public from making any non-essential visits to court facilities.
- All jury trials currently underway should continue until the trial is complete, regardless of case type.
- For case types designated “High Priority” or “Super High Priority” in the [Limited Court Service Case Priorities List](#), all court proceedings should continue as normal. Courts will schedule new jury trials as needed in those case types. Wherever possible, courts should explore the use of ITV/remote technology to conduct these hearings. The order also eases restrictions on the use of these technologies currently in Court Rules.
- For case types designated “Medium Priority” or “Low Priority” in the [Limited Court Service Case Priorities List](#), all court proceedings (except jury trials currently underway, or cases where a speedy trial has been demanded) will be suspended for 14 days. No new jury trials in these case types should be scheduled for the next 30 days.

To implement the Order issued by Chief Justice Gildea, the Fourth Judicial District has developed case handling protocols by Division. Please note the information contained in this document is specific only to the Fourth Judicial District (Hennepin County).

Probate/Mental Health Division

Questions may be directed to: **(612) 348-3164**

- Civil Commitment hearings are being held (remotely when possible).
- Emergency guardianship/conservatorship matters are being held.

Civil Division

Questions may be directed to: **(612) 348-3164**

There will be **no in-person hearings** held in the Civil Division over the next 14 days, with the following **exceptions**:

Housing Court:

No eviction hearings will take place except the following:

- Emergency Tenant Remedy Actions;
- Expedited eviction hearings and trials, which have already started under Minn. Stat. 504B.321, subd. 2; and
- Housing Court hearings and trials in which personal safety concerns are vital (e.g. lockout, matters concerning domestic abuse, etc.).

- Writs of recovery will be issued in accordance with any previously issued order or approved settlement agreement. Any writs of recovery and orders to vacate that issue will be sent to the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and it is then up to them as to how they prioritize and process the writs.
- If you had a trial or initial appearance scheduled over the next 14 days, that proceeding will be rescheduled. Initial appearances will be scheduled by sending out a notice of hearing. We will not be issuing new summons unless service of process was not completed and you request a re-issued summons.

General Civil

- Requests for Ex Parte Harassment Restraining Orders will be reviewed and issued if appropriate (no hearing required).
- Harassment Restraining Order Hearings
- Motions for Emergency Relief, such as motions for temporary restraining orders or motions for temporary injunctions.

Conciliation Court

Questions may be directed to: **(612) 348-2713**

All Conciliation Court matters scheduled for the next 30 days will be cancelled. New filings will be accepted but not yet scheduled.

Family Division:

Questions may be directed to: **(612) 348-6734**

High Priority Hearings That Will Occur Over the Next 14 Days as Scheduled

- Domestic Abuse Order for Protection, Ex Parte Order Request
- Domestic Abuse Order for Protection, Ex Parte Hearings
- Domestic Abuse Order for Protection Hearings
- Return of Child Order Enforcement
- Warrant for Custody of Child
- In-custody hearings related to a Family Court bench warrant
- Emergency Family Hearings/Emergency Family Motions
- Family Court Temporary Custody/Parenting Time Hearings
- Trials where there is an urgent custody or parenting time issue

Medium or Low Priority Hearings Not Listed Above Will Be Rescheduled, such as:

- Expedited Child Support Hearings
- Paternity custody trials
- Post-Decree custody, support, and maintenance hearings
- Temporary support and maintenance hearings
- Review Hearings
- Dissolution trials when custody is not an issue
- Trials when custody or parenting time is a non-emergency issue.

Criminal:

General questions may be directed to: **(612) 348-2040**

If you think you may have an outstanding warrant, call the Warrant Hotline at **(612) 543-9768**

High Priority Cases and calendars that will continue to occur over the next 14 days (whether Misdemeanors, Gross Misdemeanors, and Felonies):

- In-Custody First Appearances
- In-Custody – Revocations and Morrissey
- In-Custody – Rasmussen hearings
- All 28-day Omnibus hearings
- In-Custody – trials (Misdemeanors only)
- In-Custody Sentencings
- Speedy trial demands
- All requests to the Signing Judge

Medium or Low Priority Calendars That Will Not Occur in the Next 14 Days and will be rescheduled

- All Out of Custody calendars (Downtown, Brookdale and Ridgedale courthouses)
- All Out of Custody summons first appearances on felony First appearances and Revocation calendars
- All Out of Custody Rasmussen hearings
- All Out of custody trials without speedy demands (whether Misdemeanors, Gross misdemeanors, and Felonies)

Hearing Office

The Hearing Office will be holding video meetings with hearing officers beginning the week of March 23, 2020. **Call (612) 348-6000** and ask to be connected to the Hearing Office.

Violations Bureau

The Violations Bureau remains open but has been relocated from the Skyway level of the Government Center to the Government Center 11th Floor Public Counter and the counters located at the Public Safety Facility.

Please Note: If a medium/low priority hearing is postponed, individual parties may request a hearing from the assigned judge as needed.

Any criminal jury trials in progress may continue. No new jury trials will start in the next 30 days unless the case is a super high priority or high priority case. Individual judicial officers will need to determine if any such cases fall into that category in consultation with the presiding judge and the chief judge. Additional information on super high and high priority trials includes:

- All in-custody speedy trial demands will have an in-person appearance at the courthouse as scheduled.
- All out of custody trials will be automatically continued and an in-person appearance will not be necessary, unless the court is notified the case is a super high or high priority case (constitutional rights are primarily implicated, public safety concerns are paramount, personal safety concerns are vital), in which case the court should schedule a hearing to address the priority concern.

- All in-custody trials with no speedy trial demand will not be brought over on Monday for an in-person appearance. However, judges and counsel should meet as scheduled and decide how to address the continuing custody status of the defendant and schedule of any trial in such a matter

Treatment Courts (DWI/Veterans/Mental Health/Drug)

- All review hearings are canceled.
- In-custody hearings will only be heard if it is determined an “on-the-record” hearing needs to take place.
- There will be one in-custody calendar each week for all four Treatment Courts, at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

Juvenile Delinquency

General questions may be directed to: **(612) 348-4822**

High Priority Hearings That Will Occur Over the Next 14 Days as Scheduled

- Emergency Pre-Adoptive Custody Motion
- Non-Emergency Direct Placement Adoption Hearing
- Juvenile Delinquency In-Custody
- Probable Cause In-Custody
- Detention Review
- EJJ Hearing
- Non-custody delinquency trials (with speedy demands)
- Omnibus Hearing
- Certification Hearing

Medium or Low Priority Hearings Not Listed Above will be rescheduled, such as

- Non-custody delinquency trials without a speedy trial demand
- Juvenile status offenses
- Juvenile traffic

Child Protection (CHIPs):

High Priority Hearings That Will Occur Over the Next 14 Days as Scheduled

- Admit/Deny Hearing when child is in placement
- Admit/Deny Hearing related to Termination of Parental Rights or Permanency Petition
- Emergency Protective Care Hearing or Continued Emergency Protective Care Hearing
- Hearings where placement would be in jeopardy
- Parental Notifications

Medium or Low Priority Hearings Not Listed Above Will Be Rescheduled, such as

- Termination of Parental Rights or Permanency Trial
- CHIPS Intermediate Disposition Review Hearings and Permanency Progress Review Hearings
- Long Term Foster Care Review Hearings

Other Court Services or Partner-provided Services

Records Center

The Fourth District Centralized Record Center is open for limited services. Public terminals are available for record searches. Staff will issue up to two copies and they will mail the remainder of your pre-paid order. If you know what you need, you can pay for a copy through our electronic filing system using court file number 27-CV-20-000003 or you can mail a check along with your request. More information is available on the [public website](#).

Self-Help Centers

The Government Center and Family Justice Center Self-Help Centers will be open for emergency customer needs only. More guidance on what customer needs will be seen in-person is forthcoming. Assistance will still be provided over the phone, from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday – Friday, at **(651) 435-6535**. Assistance is also available [via email](#).

Legal Advice Clinics

All legal advice clinics run by the Volunteer Lawyers Network or Hennepin County Bar Association onsite at Hennepin County District Court locations have been canceled until March 27, 2020. These include:

- Legal Access Point Clinics at Self-Help Centers, Conciliation Court and Housing Court; and
- Misdemeanor Defense Project at Brookdale.

The Fourth Judicial District will make every effort to notify attorneys and self-represented litigants of the postponement and rescheduling of hearings during the next 14 days. However, if you have a court case scheduled at a Hennepin County District Court location between March 16, 2020, and March 27, 2020, and you are unsure whether your case will be heard or will be scheduled to a future date, please call **(612) 348-6000**.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch continues to monitor the most current statements and recommendations regarding COVID-19 in Minnesota. The Branch is coordinating closely with statewide partners, including the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). The Branch will be following MDH recommendations as the situation evolves. Therefore, anyone who plans to or is required to go to a courthouse will be asked to follow all necessary precautions to prevent spread. When measures are implemented, they will be posted at <http://mncourts.gov/emergency>. Information specific to the Fourth District will be posted at <http://www.mncourts.gov/Find-Courts/Hennepin/COVID-19-Information.aspx>.