

STATE OF LOUISIANA
PARISHES OF IBERIA, ST. MARTIN AND ST. MARTIN
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT COURT

In Re:

COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE
EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES
CREATED BY COVID-19
(CORONAVIRUS)

ORDER

This General Order is being used in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Louisiana, and throughout the United States. In February of this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) issued “Interim Guidance” recommending that all entities consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-10, including the review of guidance from state and local health officials. In the light of Governor Edwards’ declaration of a public health emergency and his executive order concerning public gatherings, as well as guidance from Louisiana Supreme Court, the Sixteenth Judicial District Court, in the Parishes of Iberia, St. Martin and St. Mary, issues this order. Our purpose is to address this public health crisis in a way that protects the health and safety of the public and of everyone at our Court facilities, while at the same time, to the extent possible, maintains access to the Court.

Given the risk posed to the public, and in consideration of the public health recommendations, it is hereby ORDERED that, effective beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, 12:00 p.m. through Friday, April 10, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.:

- (1) All jury trials, both civil and criminal, are hereby continued, to be reset by Order;
- (2) All grand jury proceedings in the District are hereby continued, to be reconvened by Order;
- (3) All criminal trials, hearing, and court appearances are hereby continued, to be reset by order, except initial appearances (72 hour hearings), arraignments for incarcerated persons only and bond hearings;
- (4) The delays in all criminal cases created by this Order shall constitute “just cause”, pursuant to La. Code of Criminal Procedure art. 701;
- (5) All civil trials, hearings, and court appearances are hereby continued, to be reset by order, except for hearings related to the following: civil protective orders, emergency child custody matters pursuant to La. Code of Civil Procedure art. 3945, emergency

interdictions, and matters of public health related to this crisis, unless agreed to by the sitting judge and all the parties.

- (6) All Hearing Officer conferences are hereby continued, to be reset by the Hearing Officer;
- (7) All Support Enforcement Services matters are hereby continued, to be reset by order;
- (8) All Juvenile Court and Drug Court matters will be addressed in a separate Order by those courts;
- (9) This Order does not affect the Court's ability to consider civil or criminal matters that can be resolved without hearing.

The Iberia, St. Martin, and St. Mary Parish Courthouses remain open during regular business hours. The public may continue to utilize Court services in accordance with this Order and while following all the applicable public health guidelines.

This Order remains in effect until 5:00 p.m. on April 10, 2020, or until further orders of this Court.

Dated this 16 day of March, 2020.


LEWIS PITMAN, CHIEF JUDGE