The Supreme Court of South Carolina

DONALD W. BEATTY
CHIEF JUSTICE

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MEMORANDUM

To: Clerks of Court
Circuit Court Judges
Family Court Judges
Probate Court Judges
Solicitors
Public Defenders

From: Chief Justice Beatty

Subject: Coronavirus

Date: March 16, 2020

As the number of coronavirus cases has increased in South Carolina, and a state of emergency has been declared, the South Carolina Judicial Branch continues to consider all aspects of court operations.

As the situation continues to develop, we will provide further information and direction if and when circumstances so warrant. In the meantime, please review the following directives for your courts.

- All jury trials are postponed. Non-jury trials and other hearings may continue at the trial judge's discretion, but only attorneys, their clients, and necessary witnesses will be allowed to appear. However, the Family Courts shall restrict their proceedings to emergency matters referenced in the Order dated March 16, 2020.
- All roll calls and any other large gatherings are cancelled until further notice.
- If you deem it necessary to curtail operations beyond the scope of this memorandum, courthouses should remain available for the following critical functions:
    - Acceptance of filings and payments

    - Emergency hearings
    - Transmission of necessary information to SLED and/or NCIC, as well as the County Statistics Portal information.
- Court dates may be rescheduled as is necessary and prudent. Coordinate necessary changes in schedules with your Chief Judges for Administrative Purposes.
- To the extent possible and circumstances warrant, hearings that can be held by video may be held remotely. Telephonic hearings may be held remotely as a last resort.
- To the extent possible and circumstances warrant, litigants should be excused from attending routine hearings (e.g. represented defendants at status conferences).
- Bench warrants for failure to appear shall not be issued at this time.
- If a courthouse temporarily closes, there should be adequate signs posted directing persons to the nearest other alternate location within the county where filings and payments may be made. The court should include this information on its voicemail and its website/social media if possible.

The SCJB's Crisis Management Team will continue to monitor this situation and provide further information as received. We remain committed to the safety of the state court system and to the public. Thank you for your assistance in implementing these measures.

The Supreme Court of South Carolina

ORDER

Pursuant to provisions of Article V, Section 4 of the South Carolina Constitution,

IT IS ORDERED that until subsequent order by the Chief Justice, Family Courts statewide shall only hear emergency matters including, but not limited to, DSS Emergency Protective Custody, Juvenile Detentions, Bench Warrants, and Emergency Petitions for Orders of Protection from Domestic Abuse.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that only attorneys, their clients, and necessary witnesses will be allowed to appear for these emergency hearings.

s/Donald W. Beatty
Donald W. Beatty
Chief Justice of South Carolina

Columbia, South Carolina
March 16, 2020