



# PRESS RELEASE

FROM: Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court  
Chief Judge Mark Fellheimer  
Bloomington, IL 61701

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Courthouses Remain Open with Continued Precautions**

Chief Judge Mark A. Fellheimer announced reinforced precautions are in place for court operations in the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit that includes McLean, Livingston, Ford, Woodford and Logan counties to allow the courts to safely remain open during the recent surge in Covid-19 cases.

From the middle of March, 2020 until June 1, 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Courts were open only for emergency matters. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, Courts began hearing both emergency and non-emergency matters with many courtrooms returning with remote hearings via Zoom. Those remote hearings continue until today. Other Judges continue the migration to remote hearings for cases conducive to being conducted remotely such as status hearings, temporary relief hearings and the like; however, not all cases can be conducted remotely.

In McLean County, approximately one-half of the courtrooms are now being conducted remotely for a wide variety of matters to avoid unnecessary in-person interactions to allow Courts to still conduct court business during these unprecedented times. This effort has led to a drastic reduction in courthouse populations so that people are able to social distance when in the courthouses and to avoid bottlenecks that could put individuals at risk.

In-person hearings will continue to be held on a limited basis with the following precautions remaining in effect as were instituted previously:

1. Case limits per hour for each courtroom to limit the number of persons in the courthouses.
2. All those that enter the Courthouses must wear a face-covering and maintain social distancing.
3. Entry is denied for anyone that is exhibiting Covid-19 like symptoms with screening procedures at the courthouse entrances.
4. The reallocation of courtrooms to eliminate congregations of people in the courthouses.
5. Elimination of lines for the Circuit Clerk's Office to eliminate congregations of people in the hallways.

6. Litigants are strongly discouraged from bringing others with them to the courthouse.

**Additional steps now instituted immediately are as follows:**

1. Jury trials have been halted for the month of November, 2020. A decision regarding December, 2020 jury trials will be made soon.
2. Expansion of remote hearings when possible.

Arrangements have been made for cases to be continued in certain circumstances or to be held remotely. Therefore, for litigants that have an attorney, they are strongly encouraged to contact their lawyer before coming to court to see if their case can be held remotely or if it has been continued. Attorneys and self-represented litigants are urged to contact the McLean County Circuit Clerk's Office and/or the Judge's Office assigned to their case to inquire if their case can be heard remotely or be continued. The contact information can be obtained on the McLean County Circuit Clerk's website.

Please do not arrive more than 15 minutes prior to your scheduled court time if you have an in-person hearing. All in-person hearings are conducted with participants wearing face coverings and maintaining social distancing.

Throughout the pandemic, 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Courts have, and will continue to, operate by providing essential services to the public while adhering to recommended best health practices in reducing the spread of the coronavirus when conducting court business.

Please review Administrative Order #2020-19 "Resumption of Court Operations" entered May 26, 2020 that is attached hereto and remains in full, force and effect.

Please contact Trial Court Administrator Will Scanlon at: [william.scanlon@mcleancountyil.gov](mailto:william.scanlon@mcleancountyil.gov) for any questions or concerns regarding these policies.