

IN THE LITTLE ROCK DISTRICT COURT
SECOND DIVISION
(State District 31, Pulaski County, Little Rock 2)

In re Novel Coronavirus / COVID-19 Pandemic

ORDER

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Arkansas Supreme Court has issued several *per curiam* orders implementing emergency precautions to help protect the public from unnecessary risks; the Governor has declared a State of Emergency. The courts of the State have remained open, conducting hearings with certain measures to combat the spread of the disease to the public, including court employees.

Since March 18, City of Little Rock buildings have been “closed to the public.” That is expected to continue through the entire month of June. Therefore, the court intends to conduct as many hearings as possible using videoconferencing technologies. In-person hearings in the traffic courtroom are suspended through the month of June 2020.

Currently, the court is using the Cisco Webex applications to handle as many cases as possible. In some instances, the court is using Webex and speaker telephone, in tandem, to resolve uncontested matters. However, Webex, with both audio and video engaged, is the preferred platform.

Parties and their counsel are encouraged to agree to formats for holding such hearings. By participating in a hearing via telephone or via any teleconferencing program, a defendant waives the right to have such proceeding held in-person.

On Wednesday, June 3, there are over 500 citations set for arraignment. ***THE DISTRICT COURT BUILDING WILL BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC. Citation recipients are requested to please not travel to the courthouse.***

The court strongly encourages citation recipients to contact the court via email to get on the court’s “Cyber-Docket.” The court’s email address

is TrafficCourtContact@littlerock.gov.

For people who do not have email addresses, the court's telephone number is (501) 371-4733. The phone lines are expected to be deluged all week, June 1-5, so everyone is, again, strongly encouraged to use email.

The Arkansas Supreme Court has directed that **“hearings shall be conducted by video conference; audio conference; or in-person proceedings, at the discretion of the presiding judge.”** (Emphasis added.) The Little Rock District Court Building will be closed to the public; therefore, the third option is not available.

This Order is to be interpreted broadly for protection of the public from the risks associated with COVID-19.

The public is invited and encouraged to contact the court to make arrangements to observe any and all proceedings. Anyone claiming a First-Amendment right to be present at a public hearing will be accommodated.

This court continues to follow all applicable local, state, and national health and safety guidelines to the best of its ability in discharging its essential functions.

All persons who are defendants on traffic court dockets; all persons or entities under subpoena to a court proceeding; all citizens desiring to attend proceedings; all attorneys representing parties in cases on traffic court dockets; and all representatives of the media are encouraged to contact the Court Clerk's office between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, by email – TrafficCourtContact@littlerock.gov – or by telephone – (501) 371-4733 – to inquire about any court-related matter.

Vic Fleming, Judge
Little Rock District Court
May 28, 2020