

IN THE MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT, MOUNT VERNON, OHIO

FILED

2021 MAY 18 PM 3:06

In Re: Public Health and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

JOURNAL ENTRY

MT. VERNON MUNICIPAL CT.
LISA R. MAZZA, CLERK

In accordance with the guidance issued on May 13, 2021 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) the Court temporarily orders as follows:

1. Face Coverings.

Fully vaccinated people (fully vaccinated refers to a person who is ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine, per the CDC Public Health Recommendations for Vaccinated Persons) are not required to wear a face covering in Court.

All individuals that are not fully vaccinated shall wear face coverings at all times when in Court.

Regardless of vaccination status, the requirement to wear a face covering does not apply to the following:

- A. children under ten years of age;
- B. Individuals with a medical condition such as respiratory conditions that restrict breathing, mental health conditions, or other conditions that contraindicate the wearing of a face covering;
- C. Individuals communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired or has another disability where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication;
- D. Individuals alone in an enclosed space, such as an office, or in lieu of an enclosed space, the individual is separated by at least six feet in all directions from all other individuals; and
- E. Individuals actively engaged in a public safety capacity, including but not limited to law enforcement, firefighters or emergency medical personnel.

For the purposes of this Order, a face covering is any material covering an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.

2. Social Distancing

Unless fully vaccinated, individuals must maintain six feet of social distancing from others while in Court. The Court will maintain signage to facilitate six feet of social distancing.

All fully vaccinated people can resume activities at Court without socially distancing.

3. Health Checks

Regardless of vaccination status, individuals are encouraged to assess their health before coming to Court and to stay home if you have a fever, cough, or other signs of possible COVID-19. Individuals who are ill are required to call the Court prior to their hearing or other appointment to request a continuance.

Court employees will not take temperatures or ask health questions when individuals enter the Court.

4. Hand Washing and Sanitization

Hand washing or the use of a sanitizer product that meets the CDC guidelines prior to entering the Court is encouraged. Hand washing or the use of a sanitizer while in Court is encouraged, as well. Hand washing facilities are available in the public restrooms and sanitizer will be made available throughout the Court for employees and patrons.

Court employees shall routinely disinfect high-contact surfaces, desk workstations, restrooms, and equipment.

5. Courtroom Occupancy

Up to 22 spectators will be permitted in the Courtroom's fixed seating (25% of the Courtroom's maximum occupancy pursuant to ODH guidance). The Court reserves the right to limit maximum Courtroom occupancy to fewer than 22 spectators when necessary to facilitate efficient Courtroom operations.

6. Signage

The Court will post clearly visible signage at all entrances requiring all persons not fully vaccinated entering the Court to wear a face covering. The text shall state that, unless the individual is fully vaccinated, all persons are required to wear a face covering and engage in six feet of social distancing at all times while in Court.

7. Effective Date

This Order shall be effective retroactive to May 14, 2021 at 4:00 PM EDT and remains in full force and effect until June 2, 2021 at 12:01 AM EDT unless rescinded or modified before that time.

This TEMPORARY ORDER will remain in effect until lifted by the Court.


John E. Thatcher, Judge

cc. City of Mount Vernon
Mount Vernon Police Dept.
Mount Vernon Law Director
Clerk of Court
Adult Probation Dept.

Knox County Sheriff's Office
Knox County Public Defender
Knox County Bar Association
Local Media

IN THE MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT, MOUNT VERNON, OHIO

FILED

2020 JUN -2 PM 12: 59

IN RE: JOURNAL ENTRY ESTABLISHING TEMPORARY EMERGENCY COURT OPERATIONS PROTOCOL FOR COVID-19 RISKS AND DESIGNATING TEMPORARY COURT LOCATION, PURSUANT TO R.C. SECTION 1901.028 FOR JURY TRIALS

MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT
MARY JO HAWKINS, CLERK

The matter of public health considerations and responses to the COVID-19 virus, and current declarations of the President of the United States, the Director of the Ohio Department of Health, and the Governor of the State of Ohio, are before the Court this 2nd day of June 2020. This Temporary Emergency Court Operations Protocol and Temporary Court Location Order supplements prior Orders of this Court due to the COVID-19 virus.

In order for the Court to assist all state and local agencies in maintaining public health and safety; to assist our local law enforcement and healthcare community in preserving all available resources; to assure the protection of the Constitutional rights of all individuals subject to the jurisdiction of this Court; upon the Court's own motion, the following Temporary Emergency Court Operations Protocol and Temporary Court Location Order is hereby adopted for the conduct of jury trials scheduled in this Court for the protection of the health and safety of the parties, counsel, witnesses, jurors, court personnel, and the citizens of Knox County, Ohio, effective immediately:

It is necessary, by virtue of extraordinary circumstances relating to the declared public health emergency, and considerations for the public health and safety of the community, for the Court to convene on a temporary basis for purposes of Jury Trials, beginning on the 9th day of July 2020 and continuing thereafter until further Order of this Court, at the following location:

**Knox County Memorial Building, Mount Vernon, Ohio.
All court personnel, counsel, jurors, witnesses and
victims shall report to the Knox County Memorial
Building on days of trial no later than 8:30 a.m.**

IT IS SO ORDERED, that the Court, all court personnel, counsel, jurors, parties, victims, and personnel necessary for purposes of effecting the terms and conditions of this Order, shall convene and appear at the Knox County Memorial Building, beginning on the day of trial, and each day thereafter from time to time as scheduled or convened by this Court.

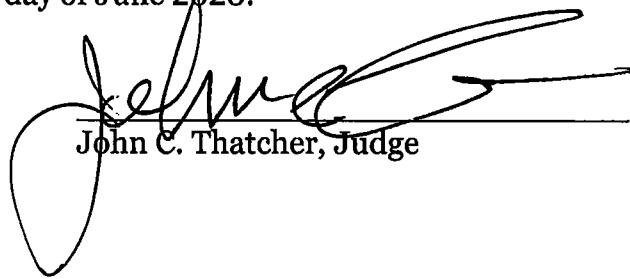
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that all persons reporting for Jury duty shall be directed by the bailiff or other court personnel to appropriate seating to allow for sufficient distance between individuals in accordance with current health practices and orders of the Ohio Department of Health. For purposes of *voir dire* and selection of the Jury, the auditorium shall be used, and the Court has made accommodations for the seating in the auditorium of all prospective jurors in the venire panel with appropriate safe distance between prospective jurors. After selection of the jury and administration of the juror oath, the Jury Trial shall convene in the ballroom of the Memorial Building, where the Court has made additional accommodations for seating with appropriate safe distance between all court personnel, counsel, jurors, and witnesses. All persons shall bring their own facial covering, and it may be worn by any juror, attorney, witness, or other court personnel, in their discretion unless otherwise instructed by the Court.

All persons shall observe appropriate and recommended health and sanitation practices during their participation in the proceedings as instructed by the bailiff or other court personnel. All persons shall provide their own hand sanitizer, water, and other personal necessities during their participation in the court proceedings. No unrestricted access shall be permitted for non-Court personnel in any area of the Memorial Building.

A final pretrial conference shall be scheduled by the Court the week of trial to discuss presentation of exhibits and witnesses in compliance with applicable health and safety practices. Counsel and the parties shall remain at counsel table at all times during *voir dire* and during the trial unless otherwise instructed by the Court. Bench conferences outside the hearing of the jury shall be accommodated by sufficient distance between participants.

This Order shall continue as a Temporary Emergency Order, for the duration of the declared public health emergency, and until rescinded or modified by this Court.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 2nd day of June 2020.



John C. Thatcher, Judge

- cc. City of Mount Vernon
- Mount Vernon Police Dept.
- Mount Vernon Law Director
- Clerk of Court
- Adult Probation Dept.
- Knox County Sheriff's Office
- Knox County Public Defender
- Knox County Bar Association
- Local Media

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IN THE MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT, MOUNT VERNON, OHIO

2020 MAY -8 PM 3:44

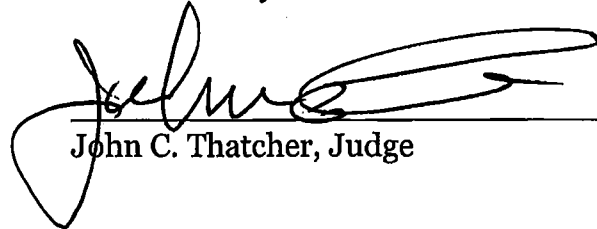
In Re: Public Health and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

**MT. VERNON MUNICIPAL CLERK
MARY JO HAWKINS, CLERK**

Consistent with Governor Mike DeWine's Responsible RestartOhio plan and guidance from the Ohio Supreme Court, to protect the health of Mount Vernon Municipal Court employees and the public while also supporting community efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, effective **May 11, 2020, at 8 a.m.**, the Court **TEMPORARILY ORDERS** as follows:

1. The public will be required to wear face coverings while attending hearings or doing any in person business with the Court.
2. Court employees will be required to wear face coverings when social distancing requirements (6 feet between people) cannot be maintained in their work area.
3. Court employees and the public will comply with social distancing requirements.
4. Block seating in the courtroom, hallway, probation waiting room, etc., will be used to maintain social distancing requirements and minimize contact.

This **TEMPORARY ORDER** will remain in effect until lifted by the Court.



John C. Thatcher, Judge

cc. City of Mount Vernon
Mount Vernon Police Dept.
Mount Vernon Law Director
Clerk of Court
Adult Probation Dept.
Knox County Sheriff's Office
Knox County Public Defender
Knox County Bar Association
Local Media

IN THE MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT, MOUNT VERNON, OHIO

FILED

In re: COVID-19/Coronavirus Policy

Journal Entry 2020 APR -2 AM 11:27

Effective immediately and until further order of the Court, for the welfare of all Court employees and the public we serve, the Court requires vigilance from everyone to prevent and contain the spread of coronavirus/COVID-19.

MT. VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT
MARY JO HAWKINS, CLERK

1. **Symptoms/Risk Factors of contracting COVID-19:** Whereas, individuals may be completely asymptomatic while infected and contagious, although most infected individuals eventually develop symptoms (ranging from mild to very severe); the most common symptoms are fever, cough, and difficulty breathing/shortness of breath; available information is dynamic and changing, but other reported symptoms can include body aches, fatigue, sore throat, anosmia/dysgeusia (lost sense of smell and taste), conjunctivitis (pink eye), runny nose, and digestive/gastrointestinal difficulties (diarrhea, nausea, etc.); also, having contact with someone with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection—especially within the same household—highly increases the risk of infection; and

2. **Short-term policy requirements regarding COVID-19:** Whereas, the work of judges and court personnel are deemed “Essential Governmental Functions” and they are expressly and “categorically exempt” from the Department of Health’s Stay at Home Order (hereafter “the Stay Home Order”) permitting its operations to continue uninterrupted (*See paragraph 10*); however, both because the Court is also an “Employer,” and because the Department of Health’s mandated COVID-19 Information and Checklist for Businesses and Employers demonstrate best practices to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff and the public, the Court has incorporated the Stay Home Order by reference in this policy, and implements all requirements in paragraph 18 within its workplace policies and practices; for the present timeframe, and for as long thereafter as the Court determines this practice is a reasonable measure to improve the health and welfare of the public and Court staff;

3. **Temporary orders:** Now, therefore, the Court orders the following protocol expanding and modifying its regular attendance, telework, and sick leave policies as follows:
 - As many employees as possible have been approved to work from home, implementing as many opportunities for telework and video conferencing as feasible.

 - Some staff will continue to work in the courthouse, but the Court will require these employees to take reasonable measures to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 infection, including, but not limited to:
 - Employees must comply with the CDC and Ohio Department of Health recommended protocols to avoid incurring and spreading infection, and the health guidelines in the Stay Home Order. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Maintaining heightened cough, sneeze, and hand hygiene etiquette throughout the work day, and practice regular social distancing of at least six feet between themselves and others;

- Regularly using the protection supplies provided by the Court, such as hand soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, and no-touch trash receptacles; and
 - Frequently performing enhanced environmental cleaning of high-touch surfaces, such as workstations, countertops, railings, door handles, and doorknobs.
- **Employees must not come to the Court's facilities if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (even if their symptoms are mild), or if they have reason to believe they have been exposed to COVID-19.**

As this Department of Labor Information Sheet provides, beginning on April 1, 2020, employees are entitled to up to two weeks of "Emergency Paid Sick Leave" (above and beyond what they ordinarily receive) for various reasons pertaining to an actual or suspected COVID-19 infection, including but not limited to their own potential or actual infection.

- Employees must conduct a thorough self-assessment for the presence of COVID-19 symptoms prior to reporting to work at the courthouse;
- Employees will have their temperatures taken when they arrive at the courthouse to report for work; employees will be asked if they have made a thorough self-assessment for the presence of COVID-19 symptoms prior to reporting to work at the courthouse; any Employee with a temperature of 100 degrees will be sent home;
- After reporting to work at the courthouse and throughout the work day Employees must immediately alert their supervisor if they develop symptoms that require them to go home or refrain from coming into work under this policy, and they will make immediate arrangements to go home;
- For employees experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, employees may not return to work for at least seven days after symptoms begin; for at least 72 hours after they are fever-free without taking fever-reducing medication; and for at least 72 hours after symptoms have improved; and
- In instances where employees' symptoms do not compromise their ability to work, but they affect their eligibility to report to the courthouse, they may be authorized to conduct some or all of their duties from home on a case-by-case basis, instead of using Emergency Paid Sick Leave, or regular Court-issued paid leave. Please contact the Judge or Clerk for guidance.

The current conditions require a heightened series of workplace standards. In the past, many of us have reported to work with minor symptoms of illness that did not inhibit our ability to work. However, for the period of this policy, the Court asks employees to remain especially vigilant to ensure their own safety and the safety of others. Therefore, the Court is also asking employees to regularly certify their compliance with these policies.

FILED

IN THE MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT, MOUNT VERNON, OHIO

2020 MAR 30 AM 10: 26

**MT. VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT
MARY JO HAWKINS, CLERK**

IN RE: COVID-19 VIRUS

JOURNAL ENTRY

On March 27, 2020, the Ohio Supreme Court issued an order which tolls the time requirements established by all Supreme Court-promulgated rules. The order is in response to Am. Sub. H.B. 197, which Governor Mike DeWine also signed on March 27, 2020. The Court hereby adopts and incorporates by reference the Supreme Court's tolling order and Am. Sub. H.B. 197 into this Journal Entry.

In order to assist state and local agencies in maintaining public health and safety in response to the COVID-19 virus; to assist local law enforcement and healthcare providers in conserving resources; and to ensure the protection of the Constitutional rights of all individuals subject to the jurisdiction of this Court, the Court *sua sponte* implements the referenced temporary tolling provisions until further order of the Court. The Clerk of Court shall adjust the Court's docket as necessary to comply with this order.

IT IS SO ORDERED


John C. Thatcher, Judge

cc. Mount Vernon Law Director
Knox County Public Defender
Knox County Bar Association
Media

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IN THE MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT, MOUNT VERNON, OHIO

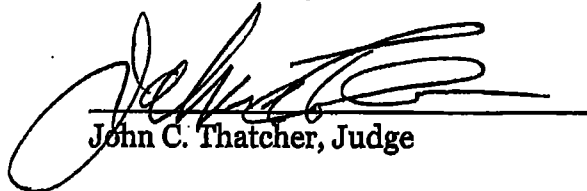
In Re: Public Health and Coronavirus (COVID-19) **JOURNAL ENTRY**
(Civil Matters & Misc.)

MT. VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT

In view of the current public health concerns due to the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Court finds that temporary orders are necessary to mitigate the public health risk while maintaining effective Court operations. Now, therefore, effective **March 23, 2020**, the Court **TEMPORARILY ORDERS** as follows:

1. For 60 days from the date of this order the Clerk shall accept civil case filings (complaints, motions, notices, etc.) **only by mail or fax**; and the public is reminded that forms for complaints in Forcible Entry and Detainer (evictions) and Small Claims are available on the Court's website <http://mountvernonmunicipalcourt.org/civil-division/>.
2. All pre-trial hearings and bench trials shall be continued to a specific date at least 60 days from the date of this order, and all pre-trial hearings shall be conducted by phone.
3. All judgment debtor examinations, rent escrow hearings and damages hearings shall be continued or scheduled to a specific date at least 60 days from the date of this order.
4. Applications for garnishment hearings shall be accepted by the Clerk and scheduled according to current procedures.
5. In pending eviction cases, hearings shall be continued or scheduled to a specific date at least 60 days from the date of this order, and the Clerk shall limit the number of eviction cases scheduled on any one day to no more than five.
6. For 60 days from the date of this order no writ of restitution shall be executed when the property subject to the writ remains occupied; if the property subject to the writ is vacant the Plaintiff may be restored to possession of the property.
7. Cases pending in the Small Claims Division of the Court shall be continued to a specific date at least 60 days from the date of this order.
8. New cases received in the Small Claims Division of the Court shall be scheduled for hearing at least 60 days from the date of this order, and the Clerk shall limit the number of Small Claims cases scheduled on any one day to no more than three.
9. The Pay Plan hearings scheduled on April 8 and May 13, 2020, at 11 a.m. are rescheduled to June 10, 2020, at 11 a.m.
10. Those who have scheduled weddings are discouraged from having their weddings take place during the next 60 days; for weddings that do go forward only six individuals may attend in addition to the individuals being married.

These **TEMPORARY ORDERS** will remain in effect until lifted by the Court.


John C. Thatcher, Judge

cc. City of Mount Vernon
Clerk of Court
Knox County Bar Association
Local Media

IN THE MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT, MOUNT VERNON, OHIO

FILED

In Re: Public Health and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

2020 MAR 13 PM 9:18
JOURNAL ENTRY

In view of the current public health concerns due to the COVID-19 (9), the Court finds that temporary orders are necessary to mitigate the public health risk while maintaining effective Court operations. Now, therefore, effective **March 13, 2020, at 8 a.m.**, the Court **TEMPORARILY ORDERS** as follows:

1. In all criminal, traffic and civil cases, only attorneys, the parties, the victims and the media will be permitted to attend hearings and trials in the courtroom on the third floor of 5 North Gay Street, Mount Vernon, Ohio, also known as the Plaza Building.
2. In all cases, witnesses in hearings or trials will be required to wait outside the third floor of the Plaza Building ready to be called as necessary.
3. Continuances will be granted when attorneys, parties or victims are or have been ill.
4. Court staff are authorized to ask individuals entering the third floor whether they are ill or have been ill and, if yes or an individual chooses not to respond, the individual will not be permitted to remain on the third floor; the Court will continue the hearing or trial or make other accommodations if the individual's business is with the Clerk's Office.
5. Attorneys, parties or victims will be permitted to object on the record in the hearing or trial, or in writing, to this temporary order restricting courtroom access.
6. The Court, in consultation with attorneys, parties and victims, will determine whether it is necessary to continue a jury trial, or to modify this temporary order restricting courtroom access.
7. The Adult Probation Department is authorized to implement temporary internal policies necessary to protect the health of Probation staff, other Court employees, probationers and Court users consistent with general public safety.

These **TEMPORARY ORDERS** will remain in effect until lifted by the Court.



John C. Thatcher, Judge

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