

6TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

FIRST AMENDED COVID-19 PROCEDURES

March 20, 2020

1. Citizens who need to conduct business at the county clerk of court, for matters not requiring a court appearance, should first utilize options available online and by mail. Many commonly requested forms for divorce, temporary protection orders, small claims, and criminal cases are available online at <https://ujslawhelp.sd.gov/>. If your trip to the courthouse is to pay a fine, online payment options are available. A list of clerk of court numbers can be found at https://ujls.sd.gov/Sixth_Circuit/Links/Counties.aspx.
2. The following persons are **not allowed into the courtroom, jury room, or offices of the clerk of court, court services, judges, or administrative staff** unless authorized by the Court:
 - a. Anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has been within 10 feet of any other person diagnosed with COVID-19 within the previous fourteen-day period.
 - b. Anyone with a fever over 100.4°F.
 - c. Anyone with a **cough or shortness of breath**.
 - d. Children aged 10 and under unless a witness or party to the proceeding.
 - e. **Anyone who has traveled to or lives with someone who has traveled to another country within the previous fourteen-day period.**

The Court may require that any person submit to screening, including but not limited to a temperature check, to determine whether the person falls into any of these categories.

3. Most court proceedings are open to spectators. However, persons not directly involved in the proceeding as a party, witness, or victim are encouraged to stay away from the courthouse to minimize the number of people gathering and potentially spreading COVID-19.
4. Persons within the following categories are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19: **(1) Over 60 years of age; (2) Underlying conditions including heart disease, lung disease or diabetes; (3) Weakened immune systems; or (4) Pregnancy.** If a high-risk individual is a plaintiff, defendant, lawyer or witness in a case currently scheduled for trial or hearing, a continuance at least thirty days **from the date of this Order** will be granted upon request. Requests for continuance may be made via phone to the clerk of court or to the judge's court reporter or court recorder. A list of clerk of court numbers can be found at https://ujls.sd.gov/Sixth_Circuit/Links/Counties.aspx. Requests may also be made in writing or orally at the time of hearing. After thirty days, requests for an additional continuance must be

accompanied by proof of age or condition and will be determined by the Court on a case by case basis.

5. Defendants in custody will be given priority in scheduling for all trials and hearings, and those within the high-risk categories referenced in paragraph 4 shall be given highest priority. An in-custody defendant shall appear via ITV whenever possible to minimize potential transmission of COVID-19 into the jail. In the event an in-custody defendant cannot appear via ITV, steps shall be taken to minimize the defendant's time in the courtroom and potential contact with other individuals.

6. The Court will conduct hearings via ITV or phone whenever possible, or continue jury trials as necessary, to minimize the number of persons required to gather in the courtroom and court offices.

7. Pursuant to South Dakota Supreme Court Order issued March 13, 2020, the 180 day rule is suspended effective March 13, 2020, until further order of the South Dakota Supreme Court.

8. Potential jurors falling into the high-risk categories listed in paragraph 4 may request to be excused from jury duty via letter to the clerk of court. The Court shall timely consider each request and inform the juror of the time period of excusal. Jurors may also make this request orally during jury selection.

9. Judges and court staff shall adopt in court practices and schedules to encourage social distancing and smaller groups of participants and spectators.

10. All courtrooms, court offices, and adjacent areas shall be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

11. If the presiding judge deems it necessary to cancel court or close court offices because of an increased threat from COVID-19, notice will be provided through the UJS notification system. Individuals may sign up for notifications at <https://ujnotifications.sd.gov/Register.aspx>

12. No wedding shall be performed by any circuit or magistrate judge or clerk magistrate within the Sixth Circuit until further order of the Court.

13. No deposition shall be conducted in any jury room or courtroom in the Sixth Circuit until further order of the Court.

14. Any mandatory sanction required pursuant to the Application of Supervisory Responses (ASR) established by SDCL § 23A-48-7 and SDCL § 23A-48-9, may be deferred in the discretion of the Court Services Officer in consultation with the deputy or chief court services officer. In consultation and with approval from the chief or deputy chief court services officer, in person contact requirements with probationers may be waived or modified.

15. Whenever SDCL 15-5A permits a hearing to be conducted by ITV, with the permission of the judge hearing the case, parties and/or counsel are permitted to appear by telephone.

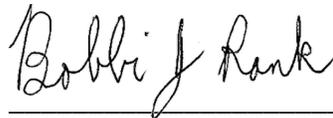
16. If law enforcement testing is not available to perform any HOPE or 24/7 probation testing in any Sixth Circuit county, court services may perform periodic testing of the probationer in lieu of the HOPE probation or 24/7 testing.

17. If 24/7 testing becomes unavailable in any county in which it was available when a driving permit or bond was issued, any driving permit that has been issued pursuant to SDCL 32-23-23 or other law, or any bond which has been set with 24/7 as a condition, is subject to being continued, modified, or revoked by the issuing judge as that judge determines appropriate based upon the circumstances of the individual case.

18. Although some counties are restricting or limiting in person contact of the public with county employees, public access to the court system within the courthouse shall continue to be provided.

19. These policies shall be effective on the date below and remain in effect until modified or repealed by the presiding judge.

Dated this 20th day of March, 2020.



Bobbi J. Rank
Presiding Judge
6th Judicial Circuit