

Wisconsin Supreme Court: Puts hold on jury trials, halts in-person proceedings statewide in favor of phone and video appearances

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Madison, Wis. (March 22, 2020) – In an effort to protect the public, attorneys, court staff and judges from the health risks associated with COVID-19, the Wisconsin Supreme Court today issued orders postponing jury trials and temporarily suspending in-person proceedings statewide, with certain limited exceptions.

All state courts remain open and continue to operate. However, trials that were scheduled to begin from now through May 22 will be rescheduled after that date. Judges, commissioners and clerks of circuit court are required to utilize e-mail, teleconferencing, and video conferencing technology in lieu of in-person courtroom appearances through at least April 30.

A copy of the order relating to postponement of jury trials can be found [here](#); a copy of the order relating to in-person appearances can be found [here](#).

“We are taking these steps not only to protect public health, but also to help ensure continued and effective operation of all our courts for the people of Wisconsin,” said Chief Justice Patience Drake Roggensack. “Our circuit court judges have taken strategic, pro-active steps to keep each of their courts operating as safely and

smoothly as possible since the start of this public health emergency. These orders provide another tool to use in that effort.”

The suspension of in-person proceedings is subject to certain exceptions if remote technology is not practicable or adequate to address the matter.

The presiding judge of each circuit court, subject to the approval of the Chief Judge of the Judicial Administrative District; the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals; or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court are authorized to determine the manner in which the in-person emergency exceptions are to be conducted in their courts, with remote participation being required when practicable.

The Court today also [postponed](#) oral arguments that were scheduled for March 30 and April 1.

“The Supreme Court continues to monitor developments related to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and additional steps will be taken as necessary,” Chief Justice Roggensack said.

“We are working actively with our judges, the legal community, as well as other branches of government and public health officials at the state and local level to meet this unprecedented challenge,” Chief Justice Roggensack said.

At the county level, the circuit courts’ electronic filing system, [eFile](#), remains available for filing court documents and case processing. At the appellate level, the office of the Clerk of Supreme Court and Court of Appeals in Madison continues to accept filings to the clerk’s post office box. Therefore, as of March 23, parties and attorneys must use mail or commercial delivery, except for emergency filings. Additional information will be posted on [wicourts.gov](#) when available.

On March 17, the Supreme Court issued an order extending filing deadlines and tolling filing time periods in some appellate case types. A copy of that order is available [here](#).

Additional information can be found under a tab labeled “[COVID-19](#)” on [wicourts.gov](#). Attorneys or litigants with questions about a particular upcoming court activity or appearance should contact the clerk of circuit court in the appropriate county.

A [resource directory](#) of Wisconsin videoconferencing contacts can also be found on

the court system's website. Additional information related to videoconferencing can be found [here](#).