

United State District Court



District of Maine

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2020 at 4 p.m.

Today, Chief Judge Jon D. Levy of the United States District Court for the District of Maine entered a General Order 2020-2 in response to the National Emergency presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Order seeks to preserve the public's constitutional and legal rights to justice and at the same time protect personal safety.

Criminal Cases

The General Order guarantees that the Court will address all essential criminal matters in a timely manner. The Judges of the Court will hold initial appearances, detention hearings, and related hearings on a regular, ongoing basis. The Judges will also hold sentencing hearings in cases where the sentence is reasonably expected to result in the release of a defendant from jail. The same is true for change of plea hearings and probation revocation proceedings in which liberty interests are at stake. In addition, the Judges will continue to respond to all other motions and issues in criminal cases that can be addressed either without a hearing or through a telephonic hearing.

Civil Cases

The Judges will hold hearings to address all civil matters in which emergency relief is sought. Parties may also request that time-sensitive matters be heard immediately. The Judges will continue to work on and respond to every motion and issue that can be addressed either without a hearing or through a telephonic hearing or conference.

Jury Trials

The need to protect the public requires that jury trials in criminal and civil cases be delayed, but we will resume trials as soon as possible. The Court regrets this delay but has concluded it is necessary considering the grave public health emergency we face.

Employee Teleworking

The Court has implemented a widespread teleworking program for our employees which minimizes the number of employees who will have to be physically present in our Portland and Bangor Courthouses. The Court has a dedicated, highly professional workforce without whom it would not be possible to administer justice. We are committed to protecting their health and safety, while also ensuring that all essential operations continue.

Going Forward

Even in times of crisis, the United States Constitution imposes a solemn duty on the Judiciary to ensure that this Country remains dedicated to the rule of law. The Judges of this Court remain committed to preserving the constitutional and legal rights of the public as the people of this Country rise to and defeat the challenges we now face.

Members of the public who have questions may contact Clerk of Court Christa K. Berry at Christa_Berry@med.uscourts.gov or (207) 274 – 5101.