

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 16, 2020

Effective March 17, 2020, all state courts in Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Salem City are to remain open, but will reduce operations and restrict access to courthouses, pending further Order.

In response to concerns about the health and safety of court personnel and the public arising out of potential exposure to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), the Chief Judges of all state courts in Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Salem City announced today that while the courts will remain open, operations will be reduced and access to the courthouses will be restricted. As more particularly described in the attached Order, these Courts have suspended many in-court proceedings. The Courts have further encouraged restricted access to the courthouse for litigants, involved attorneys, material witnesses, and necessary court personnel. These restrictions will remain in place through at least April 10, 2020. For the duration of any such restrictions, all courts will have a liberal continuance policy for any cases otherwise scheduled for trial.

*For the most current information about the schedules for Courts in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Judicial Circuit and District, please check the individual Court websites, which can be accessed through the Virginia Judicial System website at <http://www.courts.state.va.us/main.htm>.*

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE CITY OF ROANOKE  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF ROANOKE  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE CITY OF SALEM

IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CITY OF ROANOKE  
IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF ROANOKE  
IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CITY OF SALEM

IN THE JUVENILE & DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
CITY OF ROANOKE  
IN THE JUVENILE & DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
COUNTY OF ROANOKE  
IN THE JUVENILE & DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
CITY OF SALEM

#### ORDER TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING IN-PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the States of Emergency declared by the President of the United States and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Chief Judges of the Circuit Courts, the General District Courts, and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Judicial Circuit and District do hereby Order as follows:

1. All Courts in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Judicial Circuit and District will remain open;
2. All in-person proceedings (including all civil jury trials) in all Courts are suspended from the close of business on March 16, 2020, through April 10, 2020, subject to the exceptions below.
  - Proceedings necessary to protect constitutional rights of criminal defendants, including bond-related and speedy trial matters for incarcerated individuals;
  - Proceedings related to relief from abuse, including but not limited to orders of protection;
  - Proceedings related to emergency child custody orders;
  - Department of Social Services emergency matters related to child protection;
  - Proceedings related to petitions for temporary injunctive relief;
  - Proceedings related to emergency mental health orders;
  - Proceedings related to emergency protection of elderly or vulnerable persons;
  
  - Proceedings directly related to the COVID-19 public health emergency;

- Other exceptions as approved by the Chief Judge of each Court.

The presiding judge of each Court is authorized to determine the manner in which in-person court proceedings for the exceptions listed above are to be conducted.

Any permitted in-court proceedings shall be limited to attorneys, parties, necessary witnesses, security officers, media (pursuant to appropriate order) and other necessary persons (including jurors where permitted or required), as determined by the trial judge.

Throughout the suspension period, there shall be a liberal continuance policy.

Judges are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that core constitutional functions and rights are protected. Nevertheless, all judges and court clerks are urged to limit in-person Courtroom contact as much as possible by utilizing available technologies, including alternative means of filing, teleconferencing, email, and video conferencing.

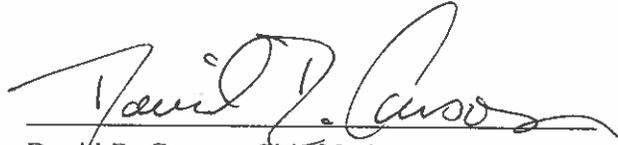
This Order expressly does not prohibit, as permitted by the trial judge, court proceedings by telephone, video, teleconferencing, email, or other means that do not involve in-person contact. This Order does not affect any court's consideration of matters that can be resolved without in-person proceedings.

Orders of protection and temporary injunctions that would otherwise expire between March 16, 2020, and April 10, 2020, are hereby extended until April 13, 2020.

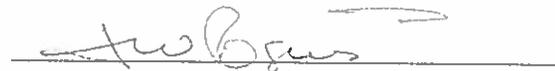
This Order is intended to be interpreted broadly for protection of the public from risks associated with COVID-19.

This Order may be shortened, modified, or extended as circumstances dictate.

FOR THE COURTS THIS 16<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 2020:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David B. Carson, Chief Judge

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacqueline F. Ward Talevi, Chief Judge

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank W. Rogers, Chief Judge

**VIRGINIA:**

**IN THE JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURTS FOR THE  
CITY OF ROANOKE, COUNTY OF ROANOKE AND CITY OF SALEM**

**ORDER**

It appearing to the Courts that the President of the United States and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia have issued certain emergency declarations concerning the health and safety of our citizens:

And it further appearing to the Courts that the Federal Center of Disease Control has issued certain guidance including mitigation strategies for communities to reduce or eliminate large gatherings of individuals to avoid the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);

And it further appearing to the Courts that they are authorized under *Va. Code* §16.1-69.35(5) to determine when the Courts shall be open for transaction of business when “under prevailing conditions, [it] would constitute a threat to the health and safety of the Clerks’ Office personnel or the general public”;

And it further appearing to the Courts that an order temporarily suspending in-person court proceedings was entered this date by the Chief Judges of the Courts of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District of Virginia;

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

It is **ORDERED** that there shall be limited access to the captioned Courts from March 16, 2020 until April 10, 2020. All cases involving Spousal Support; Child Support; Civil Custody and Visitation; Adult Criminal Cases where Defendant is not incarcerated and there are no Constitutional limitations; and Juvenile Delinquency (Criminal) Cases where the Juvenile is not

held in Detention are hereby **CONTINUED**. A presiding judge may nevertheless contact the parties and/or counsel by telephone and conduct a hearing in that manner. Witnesses subpoenaed for these matters are hereby **EXCUSED** from appearing.

All currently scheduled court dates for any incarcerated defendants or detained juveniles will go forward as scheduled and are not included within this order of continuance, subject, however, to a written motion filed in any such case of an incarcerated defendant or juvenile.

The Courts will also conduct limited hearings including arraignments for adults, bond motions, detention hearings for juveniles, all stages of petitions for Family Abuse Protective Orders, all stages of Abuse and Neglect petitions (protective orders and removals), Foster Care reviews, petitions for judicial bypass, and any other matters which by law require expedited hearings. Whenever possible, these hearings will be conducted by video or telephonically.

This Order shall remain in effect pending further Order of the Court.

ENTER: 3/16/2020



---

Frank W. Rogers, III  
Chief Judge

315 W. Church Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Roanoke, VA 24016  
(540) 853-2389