

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
FIRST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT
GENERAL ORDER 2020 - 11**

SUBJECT: Status of the City of Chicago Criminal Branch Courts

WHEREAS: In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, Chief Judge Evans had modified court operations to ensure the health and safety of the litigants, judges, and court personnel. All court personnel and visitors have to mandatorily wear masks/face coverings to enter the premises and comply with social distancing guidelines.

WHEREAS: The City of Chicago Criminal Branch Courts 9, 23, 29, 35, 38, 43, and 44 at 3150 W. Flournoy St., 5555 W. Grand Avenue and 727 E. 111th St. ceased regular court operations at the close of business on April 3, 2020. The Cook County Public Defender has notified us that their clients will not waive their right to appear in court. Therefore, the court will hold in person hearings when appropriate.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: Branch Court criminal proceedings normally heard at courtrooms 9, 23, 29, 35, 38, 43, and 44 located at 2650 S. California Ave., 3150 W. Flournoy St., 5555 W. Grand Avenue and 727 E. 111th St. via Zoom videoconference/teleconference whenever reasonably possible shall resume on July 27th, 2020 instead of July 6th, 2020 due to protective glass enclosures not being installed in the courtrooms and the courtrooms still being sanitized and cleaned. The criminal proceedings shall continue to be heard in Room 102 at 2650 S. California Ave. until July 24th, 2020.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: Furthermore, in the event that a defendant chooses to be heard in person, the judge presiding has the discretion to hold in person hearings and if there is a dispute between the parties regarding the specifics of the in person hearing, then the judge presiding shall consider the input of

the parties. All parties appearing for an in person hearing shall wear a mask/face covering and observe social distancing measures while they are present in the court premises.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: Proceedings at Branch Court 35 shall be heard on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the courtroom for Branch 38 shall serve as the holdover room on these days to ensure compliance with social distancing guidelines. No more than 2 people shall be present with the defendant during an in person hearing. Branch Court 38 shall hear cases on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays whereas the courtroom for Branch 35 shall serve as the holdover court.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: The felony preliminary matters at Branch Court 43 shall be heard on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and misdemeanor matters shall be heard on Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: Misdemeanor cases shall be heard at Branch Courts 23, and 29 on all five days. Only one Branch courtroom shall be open during the week whereas the other courtroom for the other Branch shall be used as a holdover court.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: In the City of Chicago Branch Courts, only one judge will be available on a weekly basis alternating with another Branch Court judge.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED: The following procedure shall be followed to schedule Zoom video conferencing or teleconferencing hearings for Branch Court criminal proceedings:

1. At the discretion of the presiding judge, arguments on contested criminal status hearings, bond reduction motions, motions to increase or revoke bail, and any other motion or hearing that any judge, in his or

her discretion elects to hear, may be undertaken by the way of remote hearing either through Zoom videoconferencing or teleconferencing if reasonably possible or in person when necessary.

2. Matters in which defendants are represented by private counsel shall be heard *via* Zoom videoconference or teleconference unless they request to be heard in person.
3. The court shall hear all cases *via* Zoom videoconferencing or teleconferencing whenever reasonably possible unless there is a dispute between the parties regarding remote hearing which shall be decided by the presiding judge. The judge will then schedule the remote hearing in an available time slot and will "host" the meeting. The parties will prepare a court order scheduling the remote hearing after the time and date from the court. The court will "invite" the prosecution, defense, the court reporter and the court clerk. A party intending to call a witness is responsible for providing the required information to that witness.
4. Except as otherwise provided for in this order, hearings conducted pursuant to this order shall be conducted to the same standards as hearings in a courtroom and in accordance with the Illinois Rules of Criminal Procedure, Illinois Supreme Court Rules and the Rules of Practice of the Circuit Court of Cook County. If any party does not appear at the time of scheduled remote hearing, the hearing will be cancelled and will only be rescheduled upon presentation of a written motion requesting same.
5. The attorney for any party requiring the use of interpreter/ADA or special needs accommodations is responsible for providing the presiding judge with a court order specifying the hearing date and time,

the language/special accommodations required, and for providing the information required by the interpreter or accommodation provider to attend the remote hearing.

6. The precise method in which a remote hearing will be conducted remains within the discretion of the judge presiding the individual case, within the bounds of applicable law, rules, and practice procedures.
7. Where a witness attends the remote hearing, the witness will be sworn or affirmed by the judge prior to commencement of their testimony.
8. The court reporter is the only person authorized to record the remote hearing by electronic means, stenography or any other method. Any recording by a party or other person of a remote hearing without the permission of the court is strictly forbidden. All parties attending the remote hearing should ensure they have good connection/signal to avoid a breakdown in connection during the hearing. An Ethernet (wired) connection is recommended over a Wi-Fi connection. A poor video connection of a party or their attorney is not grounds to continue a hearing.

Dated at Chicago, Illinois this 2nd day of July 2020.

Presiding Judge
E. Kenneth Wright, Jr.

JUL 02 2020

Circuit Court-1624

ENTERED.


E. KENNETH WRIGHT, JR.
PRESIDING JUDGE
FIRST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT