

Dated this _____ day of June, 2020

Jennifer R. Dorow
Chief Judge, Third Judicial District

STATE OF WISCONSIN

CIRCUIT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION

WAUKESHA COUNTY
20-SO-25 (PR) (67)

IN THE MATTER OF:
COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN FOR THE SCHEDULING OF
PROBATE DIVISION PROCEEDINGS

WHEREAS the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic of COVID-19 due to widespread human infection worldwide, and Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers and Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow have declared a public health emergency; and

WHEREAS the Register in Probate has collaborated to balance legally required access to our courts and service to the public, while protecting the health and safety of the litigants, judges, court staff and security, attorneys, and other participants in court proceedings, and all other persons in the courthouse complex in order to fulfill our constitutional obligations; and

WHEREAS, in response to Wisconsin Supreme Court directives and requests from the Chief Judge of the Third Judicial Administrative District (Chief Judge), the Register in Probate developed a plan for the scheduling of cases and expansion of in-person court proceedings.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS ORDERED that beginning June 22, 2020, Probate operations will resume to normal according to the following plan:

In Person Commissioner Hearings:

1. Judicial official, court staff, bailiff, counsel, parties, witnesses and all public present in the courtroom shall be wearing a face covering, unless the judicial official specifically determines on the record that it is necessary for a witness not to wear a face covering during the witness' testimony in order for the judicial official to weigh the witness' credibility;
2. Thursday hearings will no longer be stacked at 8:30 and 9:30; The hearings will be scheduled every 10-15 minutes which will allow us to process anywhere from 8-12 hearings per Thursday schedule;
3. There will be a basket for any in court filings. These filings will be properly sterilized after the hearings prior to any signing and/or scanning;
4. Gloves should be available for the staff if they are required to touch, hold, or pass off any in court filed document;
5. Wednesday OTSC hearings shall be scheduled based on 10 cases every 30 minutes starting at 1:30 to 3:30 to reduce the number of people in the courtroom and the hallways;
6. There will be supplies available to sanitize the work stations; counsel/parties will be required to clean their area after completing their hearing; staff will sanitize all other areas as needed;
7. There will be markings on the gallery seating to denote proper social distancing;
8. Signage will be posted reminding individuals to maintain social distancing;
9. Plexiglas barriers, if available, shall be installed in C 121 between the judicial official and the clerk; Plexiglas barriers shall be installed between parties at the counsel table;
10. Information regarding COVID will be sent with the notices to litigants on what to expect when they arrive.

Opening Probate Office to Public:

1. Limit the number of parties in the CT/Probate office;
2. Mark floor for proper social distancing;
3. Signage will be posted reminding individuals to maintain social distancing;
4. Require masks be worn in the public area of the office whether it is a customer or staff;
5. Use gloves when handling filings over the counter or handling financial transactions;
6. Staff should be masked if they go into the public area of office or courthouse and in the common areas of the staff area of the office;
7. Information regarding COVID will be sent with the notices to litigants on what to expect when they arrive.

In addition any and all requirements promulgated by the Civil Division above and beyond the requirements contained herein shall be followed in their entirety.