

Pulaski County courts respond to COVID-19

March 20, 2020 For Immediate Release

In response to concerns about COVID-19, the Pulaski County courts are working with local emergency management, are monitoring the situation with guidance from health officials, remain open for operations, and are enacting continuity of operations, which will change how we operate. For questions about a specific hearing, you should contact that court directly.

The [Indiana State Department of Health](#), which is Indiana's lead agency on COVID-19, has the latest information about the virus. The best approach is to use fundamental healthy practices, such as washing your hands, covering your mouth with your arm or a tissue rather than your hand, and staying home when you are ill.

Maintaining required court operations is important. The health and safety of our employees and community are equally important. Therefore, Pulaski County Courts will operate using their developed continuity of operations plans and will continue to keep the community informed regarding procedures.

In Pulaski County, the Pulaski County Commissioners closed county buildings to the public, effective Monday, March 23, 2020. Court offices will remain open for telephone calls and e-filing, but the public will not be admitted unless directly ordered to do so.

Courthouse Employees

All staff of the Pulaski County courts should continue to report to work, using sick time if feeling ill; remain in contact with their Judge for instruction; and work remotely if they have been instructed to do so by their presiding judge.

Jury Duty

Individuals who have received a jury summons should contact the court by telephone directly for instruction. No jury trials will occur in Pulaski County until after May 4, 2020 based upon the authority of the Indiana Supreme Court the order granted under Administrative Rule 17.

Litigants/Parties to a Case

Individuals who are scheduled to come to court for a hearing in a criminal matter or problem-solving court matter prior to April 6, 2020, should contact their attorney directly if they have not received notice in the mail specifically regarding that hearing. This is a constantly evolving situation and you should know the Judges are watching it closely.

Individuals who are scheduled to appear for a juvenile or Child in Need of Services (CHINS) matter before April 17, 2020, should contact their Attorney or Circuit Court if they are

unrepresented, **before** any scheduled Court date.

Individuals who are scheduled to appear in court for a civil matter prior to April 6 should contact their attorney directly by telephone.

If represented, litigants should be in contact with their attorney to receive the advice of counsel.

If you have been exposed to the COVID 19 virus, are not healthy, or need special consideration contact your Attorney or the Court by phone as soon as possible and **prior** to your scheduled hearing date. The Court will attempt to make arrangements for you to appear by phone or electronically, if appropriate.

Attorneys

Lawyers who are scheduled to appear prior to April 6, 2020 should follow the guidelines provided them directly by the courts in previous communications. Any questions should be directed to the courts by telephone.

E-filing and Odyssey I

Pulaski County transitioned to the statewide case management system, Odyssey, on Monday, March 16, 2020, after a year of preparing to do so. This transition will allow the courts to continue to operate, even if staff must work remotely to handle filings. Cases and documents can continue to be filed through the statewide system. No filings will be accepted in person and should be mailed if an unrepresented litigant finds it necessary to do so. Please call the courts directly with questions regarding the same.

Litigants, attorneys, press, and public can continue to view case information on mycase.in.gov.

Jail

The Pulaski County courts are working with the Pulaski County Sheriff to ensure public safety. Anyone arrested or defendants already in jail will continue to be seen by each Judicial Officer as required under existing laws. The courts will maintain each individual's right to due process, even considering these difficult times. Each court has established video conferencing ability with the jail to hold essential hearings as necessary for any inmate.

All questions regarding jail operations and visitation should be directed to the Pulaski County Sheriff's office at 574-946-6655.

Juvenile Facility

Pulaski County does not have a juvenile facility. Each juvenile facility will have their own requirements. Please contact your child's Probation Officer if you do not have contact information for that facility. Please call a facility **before** you travel.

Pulaski Circuit Court will make necessary arrangements for counsel to meet with clients if necessary.

Probation and Court Ordered Services

Pulaski County courts run the Pulaski County probation department/court ordered services. All individuals on probation should continue to be in contact with their Probation Officer and are expected to continue to appear in person or as directed by their probation officer. **Probation Department: 574-946-6558. probationoffice@pulaskicounty.in.gov**

Special Volunteers

Volunteers, such as CASA or VASIA, who have cases before the court scheduled through April 17, 2020 should contact Pulaski Circuit Court at 574-946-3851 for updates as to whether each hearing will be held or continued. If you have been exposed to the COVID 19 virus, are not healthy, or need special consideration, please contact the Court by phone as soon as possible and **prior** to your scheduled hearing date. The Court will attempt to make arrangements for you to appear by phone or electronically.

Administrative Rule 17

[Administrative Rule 17](#) describes the Indiana Supreme Court's ability to oversee the local administration of trial courts in the event of any unanticipated work interruption. Trial courts can utilize the rule by petitioning the Supreme Court for emergency relief, if needed, based on local circumstances. Pulaski County Superior and Circuit Courts have filed a petition for emergency relief and it has been granted under 20S-CB-00160. A copy of the order is available upon request from either court or online.

The Pulaski County courts are working with local emergency management and health departments to ensure we are taking the necessary steps in response to the virus, while maintaining community safety. Media with questions should be directed to the judicial officer with any questions.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in these efforts.

Judge Crystal A. Kocher
Pulaski Superior Court
(574) 946-3371

Judge Mary Welker
Pulaski Circuit Court
(574) 946-3851