

**IN THE VERMILION MUNICIPAL COURT  
ERIE COUNTY**

IN RE: TEMPORARY ORDER IN RESPONSE  
TO THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

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This Court issues this General Order in response to the recent outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Ohio and across this country.

The Governor of the State of Ohio, Michael DeWine, has declared a state of emergency which, among other things, limits larger indoor gathering.

This Court authorizes the use of audiovisual devices and technologies for as many court actions or proceedings as is practicable.

This public health emergency is finding of "just cause" for continuances deemed necessary by the Judge.

All visitors to the courthouse shall pass through the magnetometer and shall use a sanitizing wipe or spray provided by the court. Visitors to the clerk's window shall also utilize sanitizing products provided by the court before being assisted by the court staff. The Court reserves the right to have cases rescheduled for those who come to court exhibiting signs of illness. Visitors may be turned away and sent a new court date by mail. In such case, they shall verify the mailing address with the clerk's office and leave the building. The court cannot control the number of cases filed. However, the following practices shall be employed to protect staff and visitors.

The Judge has the right to remove anyone from the court who are suspected of being infected or ill.

The bailiffs will limit the number of people entering the courtroom at one time. Defendants may be divided into groups entering the courtroom at staggered intervals.

Defendants may be asked to return to their cars and return to the court when called so that a limited number of people will be in the courthouse.

Civil pretrials shall be conducted by phone. If scheduled pretrials cannot proceed telephonically, then they may be continued by court order.

All matters that can be handled remotely shall be conducted in this fashion until further notice including waiving tickets.

When appropriate, the Judge shall order jail sentences to commence at a date in the future in order to avoid overcrowding jail facilities with nonviolent offenders at this time. Those dates may be revisited from time to time as this emergency progresses.

Parties to court proceedings shall request continuances if they or family members are ill. For the months of March and April 2020, any filing fees normally associated with a continuance request shall be waived.

Continuances: Defendants that would like to contest their case can avoid coming to the courthouse for their arraignment by filing a not guilty plea prior to their arraignment. Defendants can download a Not Guilty Plea with Time Waiver from the Court's website, fill it out and file it with the Clerk of Court by facsimile or email prior to their arraignment date. The Not Guilty Plea form also gives Defendants the option to waive their right to a speedy trial and permit the Court to set their next court date further out into the future.

While the Court will continue to accept filings at the window, we strongly recommend filings by facsimile or mail. The Court's facsimile number is 440 204-2431. Pleas of not guilty can be filed by facsimile, emailed to Clerk's office

[www.vermilionmunicipalcourt.org](http://www.vermilionmunicipalcourt.org) or mailed to the Vermilion Municipal Court, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio 44089.

The Judge may adopt additional health precautions by supplementing this order from time to time.

No weddings will be scheduled until further order of court.

Court staff, attorneys, witnesses, jurors and security personnel who exhibit signs of illness shall contact the court by telephone or email and shall not come into the courthouse or report for duty unless specifically instructed to do so by the Judge.

Court staff may be subject to health screening or testing, when screening or testing is available. All court staff whenever returning to the courthouse at other times of day shall wipe their hands sanitizing spray or wash hands. All staff shall practice good hygiene and social distancing as much as possible.

All matters required to be recorded for preservations shall be conducted in the courtroom through the courtroom recording equipment. If recording is not available or accessible and a record is desired or necessary, the court and the parties shall jointly draft a statement in lieu of transcript of the proceedings in accordance with appellate rules.

No jury trials shall be conducted during the months of March, April or May 2020.

This emergency order may be amended and supplemented from time to time in order to address this public emergency.

At this time, Vermilion Municipal Court is "Open with Restrictions" with the above provisions applicable. When the emergency subsides, the court shall enter an order declaring an end to the emergency and returning the court to its normal operations.

So ordered.

  
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Judge W. Zack Dolyk

March 19, 2020