



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

Administrative Office
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Bldg. 1, Room, E-316
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
(304) 340-2305 Jennifer Bundy
(304) 340-2306 April Harless
(304) 558-1212 FAX
Web Site: www.courtswv.gov
Facebook: [wvjudiciary](https://www.facebook.com/wvjudiciary)
Twitter: [WVCourts](https://twitter.com/WVCourts)
SmugMug: <https://wvcourts.smugmug.com>
Email: Jennifer.Bundy@courtwv.gov
Email: April.Harless@courtswv.gov

Supreme Court Issues Order Suspending Court Proceedings Throughout W.Va. Due to Coronavirus

For immediate release Monday, March 16, 2020

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Chief Justice Tim Armstead and the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia today directed state courts to suspend all but emergency proceedings through April 10 due to public safety concerns about coronavirus (COVID-19).

The court order filed today says all civil and criminal trials and jury orientations should be postponed. The only exception would be a trial where a criminal defendant's speedy trial rights may preclude the postponement.

Emergency hearings arising from abuse and neglect petitions, domestic violence protective order petitions, mental hygiene petitions, and criminal arraignments and preliminary hearings with statutory time requirements can still be held, at the discretion of the presiding judge. Those emergency hearings should be held using technology to avoid person-to-person contact, if possible.

Circuit clerk's offices and judicial offices throughout West Virginia where public access has been restricted should remain available by phone and e-mail and have drop boxes for court filings. There is a drop box for filings at the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia Clerk's Office and the office will remain open.

All cases scheduled to be heard by the Supreme Court on March 17, 18, 24, and 25 will be rescheduled.

The Supreme Court order issued Monday supplements the protocol issued March 12. Both are available on the West Virginia Judiciary website:

<http://www.courtswv.gov/covid19/COVID19.html>.

"We are attempting to address the need to proceed with the critical work of our court system while also addressing the need to protect public safety. Any proceedings that either can be continued or that legally and technically can be held via telephone or video should be addressed in that manner so we can keep as many people outside of group settings as possible," Chief Justice Tim Armstead said.

Chief Justice Armstead announced the new order to judicial officers via Skype on Monday.

"With the Governor recommending that certain steps be taken, we want to make sure we are complying with those steps as well as those measures we believe are

necessary to address specific and unique issues,” Chief Justice Armstead said in his address to circuit judges, family court judges and magistrates.

“The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals has great confidence in the ability of our judges and court staff to handle these charges professionally,” Chief Justice Armstead said.

The March 12 protocol and notices posted in courthouses will remain in effect to give directions to parties, attorneys, witnesses, jurors and the public. “This is an ever changing situation. It is likely we will issue additional or revised protocols,” Chief Justice Armstead informed judicial officers today.

##