

STATE OF MINNESOTA

DISTRICT COURT

COUNTIES OF CARLTON, COOK, LAKE

AND ST. LOUIS

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER MARCH 20, 2020**

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**WHEREAS**, On March 13, 2020, the Minnesota Governor Tim Walz declared a peacetime state of emergency pursuant to the issuance of Executive Order 20-01 due to the worldwide spread of COVID-19, also referred to as the Coronavirus; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 13, 2020, the Minnesota Supreme Court issued Administrative Order ADM20-8001 concerning the continuing operations of the courts of the state of Minnesota under a statewide peacetime declaration of emergency initially providing that courthouses will remain open, discouraging *non-essential* visits to courthouses, promoting the use of social distancing and other mitigation factors for individuals within the courthouses, and requiring that no person who has an elevated risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 attend any in-court hearing or proceeding; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 20, 2020, in light of the continuing state of emergency and in an effort to further limit gatherings in public locations, the Minnesota Supreme Court issued Administrative Order Continuing Operations of the Courts of the State of Minnesota Under a Statewide Peacetime Declaration of Emergency providing that access to all court facilities shall be limited to only court staff and judicial officers, and participants whose presence is required for scheduled court proceedings. Case participants may include parties, attorneys, and individuals who are required to be present for the proceeding at direction of the presiding judge. Media access shall be coordinated, with requests for access being made through the Judicial Branch Court Information Office. All in-person access to judicial branch facilities and services, including public access terminals, will be unavailable during this time. Courthouse staff will continue to be available via telephone, and unless required to file electronically, filings may be made by e-mail as directed by court administration, by mail, in a drop box designated for court filings, as available, or by other means provided by court administration; filing fees still apply; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 484.69, subd. 3, the chief judge of the judicial district has general administrative authority over the courts in the judicial district; and

**WHEREAS**, in an effort to protect the public, as well as court participants and court staff pursuant to the Order of the Minnesota Supreme Court, by ensuring only persons necessary for court proceedings, while ensuring that constitutional rights are preserved;

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

1. Access to the Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis County courthouses will be limited to the parties in the case who are participating in the hearing, attorneys who represent those parties, any necessary court staff, and other individuals the presiding judge determines are necessary to conduct the hearing. Representatives of the media are permitted to attend hearings held in courtrooms, coordinated through the Judicial Branch Court Information Office (courtinfo@courts.state.mn.us) at least 24 hours before the time of the hearing.
2. Efforts will be made to accommodate remote appearances for every scheduled hearing.
3. The court facility will be closed to the public. For persons authorized under paragraph 1 of this order attending in-person, an established courthouse door shall be used, and persons must identify the hearing or proceeding for which their attendance is required, such as by providing the name of the case or case number. The County shall designate what door or doors shall be used.
4. For persons who have other business with the court, eFiling, U.S. Mail, and telephone access will be available. Court administration can be reached at the following numbers: Carlton County: 218-384-9578; Cook County: 218-387-3610; Lake County: 218-834-8330; St. Louis County Duluth: 218-726-2460; St. Louis County Hibbing: 218-262-0105; St. Louis County Virginia: 218-471-7106; and court administration for all locations can be reached at the following email address: 6thdistrictcourts@courts.state.mn.us.
5. This Order supersedes my Administrative Orders dated March 18, 2020, regarding access to the courthouses. This Order remains in full force and effect as long as the Supreme Court's Order limiting public access is in effect.

BY THE COURT:

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Hon. Sally L. Tarnowski  
Chief Judge  
Sixth Judicial District