

In the Indiana Supreme Court

In the Matter of the Petition of the
Ripley County Courts for
Administrative Rule 17 Emergency Relief.

Supreme Court Case No.
20S-CB-214



Order

The courts of Ripley County *en banc* have petitioned this Court for emergency relief pursuant to Indiana Administrative Rule 17. The petition states, in part, that the President and Governor have declared health emergencies related to the 2019 novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”); the Centers for Disease Control has recommended people not congregate in groups; and all Ripley County public schools are closed until at least May 1, 2020. The petition indicates that this emergency may inhibit the litigants’ and courts’ ability to comply with statutory deadlines and rules of procedure.

The Court finds that good cause exists for granting emergency relief.

Being duly advised, the Court GRANTS the petition, DECLARES pursuant to Indiana Administrative Rule 17 that an emergency exists in Ripley County, and APPROVES the plan as submitted. The Court ORDERS as follows to ensure the orderly and fair administration of justice during this emergency, effective **March 20, 2020**:

1. The Court authorizes the tolling, from the effective date of this order **through May 4, 2020**, of all laws, rules, and procedures setting time limits for speedy trials in criminal and juvenile proceedings, public health, and mental health matters; all judgments, support, and other orders; and in all other civil and criminal matters before the courts of Ripley County. Further, no interest shall be due or charged during this tolled period.
2. This Court authorizes immediate suspension of all criminal and civil jury trials, including those with a “fast and speedy” setting requested, through **May 4, 2020**. The courts of Ripley County are directed to review **no later than April 20, 2020**, whether continued suspension is necessary; and if it is not, to resume jury trials **no later than May 4, 2020**, to allow adequate notification of the jury pool. If the courts of Ripley County believe continued suspension is necessary, they may petition this Court to extend the suspension.
3. **Through May 4, 2020**, this Court authorizes immediate suspension of all non-essential hearings in civil and criminal cases, excluding emergency CHINS detention hearings, domestic violence hearings, and other matters deemed an emergency in the discretion of the presiding judge.

4. **Through May 4, 2020**, the courts of Ripley County are authorized, in their discretion and subject to applicable Constitutional limitations, to limit spectators (other than parties to the litigation and their attorneys) in courtrooms to the extent necessary to provide adequate social distancing and to limit the size of the gathering consistent with public-health recommendations.
5. **Through May 4, 2020**, the courts of Ripley County are authorized to allow attorneys to appear remotely when possible.
6. **Through May 4, 2020**, the courts of Ripley County are authorized to post signage at all public entry points to judicial facilities advising individuals not to enter the building if they have:
 - a. Been out of the country in the last 14 days;
 - b. Resided with or been in close contact with someone who has been out of the country in the last 14 days;
 - c. Traveled domestically within the United States where COVID-19 has sustained widespread community transmission;
 - d. Been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital, or health agency;
 - e. Been diagnosed with or had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19; or
 - f. A fever, cough or shortness of breath;and to direct bailiffs or court security officers to deny entrance to individuals attempting to enter in violation of these protocols.
7. The courts of Ripley County shall file a status update **no later than April 20, 2020**, to inform this Court of whether there is an ongoing need for emergency relief.

Done at Indianapolis, Indiana, on 3/24/2020.



Loretta H. Rush
Chief Justice of Indiana