

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE WYANDOTTE NATION OF OKLAHOMA
WYANDOTTE DISTRICT

MAY 15 2020
3:00 PM KF

IN RE:

COVID-19 PANDEMIC EMERGENCY,
RE-OPENING OF COURT SYSTEM AND
ESSENTIAL STAFFING,

)
)
) SC Adm. Order 2020-1
)
)

Date
Andy Zink
Court Clerk

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

The Supreme Court of the Wyandotte Nation of Oklahoma, in step with the Tribal Counsel, Executive Branch, and the Principle Chief, issues the following directive to the Wyandotte District Court and all with regards to the ongoing essential personnel of that court system with regards to the Covid-19 virus pandemic shut-down. The Supreme Court and the judicial branch of the Wyandotte Nation being a sovereign and autonomous entity of the tribal government, declares its jurisdiction over judicial matters to make this Emergency Administrative Order for the Judicial branch of the Wyandotte Nation of Oklahoma.

The health and continued safety of the citizens of the Wyandotte Nation is foremost in our minds. The best information available indicates, at this time, the Wyandotte Nation expects continuing concerns about the Covid-19 virus over the next several weeks. As has been seen around Indian Nations and their citizens have been most susceptible to this virus. We consider this risk to be the most serious and unprecedented risk to Indian Tribes since smallpox was introduced to our ancestors in ages past. We do not wish to see any of our brothers and sisters put at more risk due to the requirements of the court hearings and appearances. Thus, to protect the citizens and employees of the Wyandotte Nation and to protect the, defendants, plaintiffs, law enforcement, attorneys, social workers, the court staff and personnel, as well as, the public at large, the Supreme Court issues the following rules for this Emergency Administrative Order:

1. Due to the recent upsurge in reported Covid-19 cases and elevated death rate in the nearby community of Grove, Oklahoma, the Court will remain closed to all non-emergency matters, until further notice. On June 1, 2020, a determination will be made with regard to emergency court sessions, each matter brought before the Court will be considered on a case-by-case basis by administrating judge or justice to determine the emergency status of the matter.
2. When and if the Court is convened for emergency matters, safety precautions will remain in place:

* Emergency hearings only will be heard virtually to ensure the safety and decreased risk of possible infection to all parties.

In the event that an emergency hearing must be heard in the courtroom, which will be determined by the presiding Judge, the following protocol will be followed:

- A). Cloth facemasks will be worn by all persons and personnel in attendance at such hearing;**
 - B). Social distancing of 6 feet shall be observed at all times. No personal contact will be allowed at all;**
 - C). Alcohol hand disinfectant will be used quit liberally and frequent hand washing with soap and water is highly encouraged.**
 - D). All surfaces will be disinfected before and after each such hearing.**
- 3. The court is presently operating on remote locations basis. Court staff and personnel hours to be determined by the Court Administrator. Court staff will not suffer any pay cut as a result for working remotely;**
 - 4. Attorneys may continue to file non-emergency matters, by digital means or mail only. However, any hearing or orders regarding such filings will not be set until after the court re-opens post-pandemic emergency. Except upon extraordinary grant of judge assigned, any responses to such filings are tolled till further notice of the Court. Such grants will not be given lightly;**
 - 5. Agreed to orders of parties will be allowed. Contested hearings are, at best, difficult to conduct digitally, thus, for these hearing will not be set until the court re-opens.**

We will continue look at ways we can continue to serve the Wyandotte Nations in our court functions under these difficult circumstances. We also ask that each and every one in this wonderful nation finds a way to help their brothers and sisters in need and that we all offer assistance to the best of our ability to those in need.

So Orderd this 12th day of May 2020.



**Earl D. Lawson
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
Wyandotte Nation of Oklahoma**