

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
FIRST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

**Subject: General Administrative Order No. 2020-05 (amended)
COVID-19 Emergency Measures, Modification of Operations**

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that, pursuant to Ill. S. Ct., Illinois Courts Response to COVID-19 Emergency/Social Distancing, M.R. 30370 (eff. June 30, 2021) and guidance received June 14, 2021, from the Cook County Depart. of Public Health, the requirement of six (6) feet of distance between persons in the courtroom is modified **to require three (3) feet of distance** between persons in the courtroom;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, in pursuit of the best practices for conducting court proceedings in person, remotely, or in a hybrid of the two in First Municipal Division of the court, conducting proceedings with all persons physically present in the court is preferred, with the understanding that each impending court proceeding may be evaluated to determine whether it is appropriate for some or all participants to appear remotely;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED:

First Municipal Cases.

1. Civil Cases.

- a. Bench trials and jury trials may be held in First Municipal Division by videoconference, with all participants physically present in court, or By a combination of those means;
- b. Initial and responsive pleadings and responsive motions may be filed, in person or be electronic filing with the circuit clerk, as provided in Ill. S. Ct. R. 9 (eff. August 14, 2020);
- c. Mandatory arbitration hearings, including those previously scheduled, may be held by videoconference, with all participants physically present in court, or by a combination of those means;

- d. Except as ordered herein, procedures for the administration of court operations shall be determined by the Presiding Judge of the First Municipal District under his supervision;

2. Civil Matters, First Municipal District.

- a. Discovery shall continue as scheduled; oral depositions may be taken by videoconference pursuant to Ill. S. Ct. R. 206(h) (eff. October 1, 2019);
- b. Where it is not reasonable possible to conduct an oral deposition for reasons related to the COVID-19 emergency, the parties shall use their best efforts to postpone the deposition by agreement and stipulation for a period not to exceed 60 days; absent such agreement, the proceedings shall be deferred until such later date as the court can review the matter and issue appropriate directives; nothing in this order shall be construed to limit the discretion of the judge presiding to determine the merits of an attorney's alleged inability to comply with a notice of an oral deposition;
- c. Except for good cause shown, participants in litigation shall not be penalized if discovery compliance is delayed for reasons relating to the COVID-19 emergency; this provision is to be liberally construed;
- d. The Presiding Judge of the First Municipal District shall establish procedures for hearing all matters, including, but not limited to, scheduling by administrative order, as long as such procedures are consistent with this order;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that official court reporters and interpreters shall be available for remote proceedings as they would be for in-person proceedings; digital reporters shall operate the electronic recording system for in-person proceedings in courtrooms using an electronic recording system; when an electronic recording system is not available, at the discretion of the judge presiding, official court reporters and interpreters shall be present in the courtroom for in-person proceedings; broadcasting, transmitting or publishing audio or video recordings of teleconference and videoconference court proceedings is prohibited, except as authorized by Ill. S. Ct. R. 46 and 63;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, except as otherwise ordered herein, this order is effective July 23, 2021.

Dated at Chicago, Illinois on this 27th day of August, 2021.

Presiding Judge E. Kenneth Wright, Jr.

ENTERED:

AUG 27 2021

Circuit Court - 1624



**E. KENNETH WRIGHT, JR.
PRESIDING JUDGE
FIRST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**