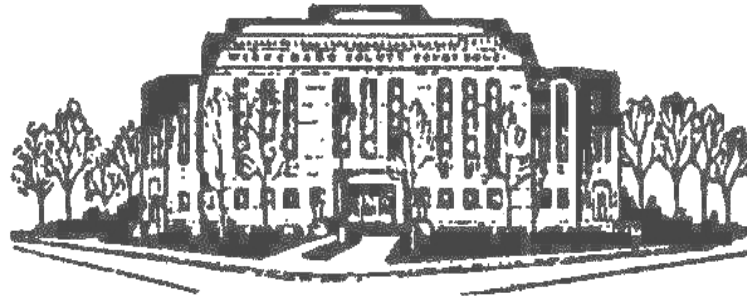


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 26, 2020

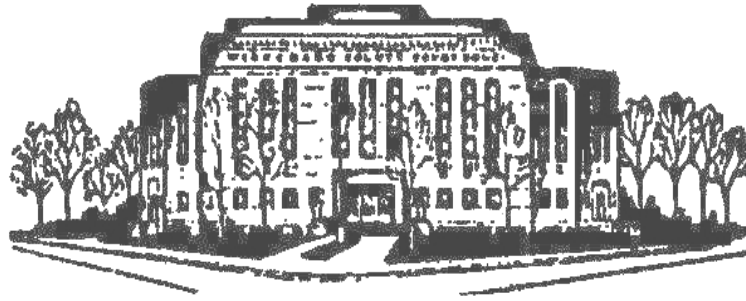
WINNEBAGO COUNTY COURTS TO RESUME IN PERSON PROCEEDINGS (PHASE I)

On June 26, 2020, Chief Judge Barbara H. Key signed an Order Approving a COVID-19 Circuit Court Operating Plan for Winnebago County to allow for the resumption of in person proceedings and jury trials. Effective June 29, 2020, Winnebago County courts will resume in person proceedings in a limited capacity subject to practices and procedures outlined in an Operational Plan created by the judiciary and a task force of county stakeholders. Such practices will include that face coverings are to be worn by all individuals in the courtroom, including the judge and staff. Judges will continue to schedule and conduct court proceedings remotely but may now conduct in person hearings at their discretion based on constitutional and statutory requirements and other considerations.

The resumption of in person proceedings will be a four phase approach from limited in person hearings to jury trials and ultimately to all proceedings without restriction. Winnebago County jury trials will resume no sooner than July 14, 2020. Litigants and their attorneys need to pay close attention to their notice of hearing, as it will include important information as to where and how their hearing will be conducted. All courts should continue to favor remote appearances wherever possible and encourage the broad use of waivers of appearance. All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.

In considering the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the Courthouse, the judiciary established a committee of multidisciplinary county stakeholders to develop a plan for opening the courts for in person proceedings in accordance with the Wisconsin Supreme Court's COVID-19 Task Force report and Supreme Court order dated May 22, 2020. The plan was developed with the intent to minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19, while also recognizing the need to provide all constitutional and statutory protections to the litigants and interested parties, as well as the public's right to access.

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Highlights of the Plan:

- Masks are required, a 3-ply mask will be provided upon arrival to the courthouse, or you are encouraged to bring your own of equal or better quality.
- Parties should give themselves extra time due to possible lines going through the Security Checkpoint.
- There will be hand sanitizer available as well throughout the courthouse. You may bring along with you your own sanitizer or wipes as well.
- Social distancing will be required in all areas of the courthouse.

The full operational plan is posted at the Clerk of Court page of the Winnebago County website at: [Order Approving Operational Plan for the Resumption of In-Person Proceedings and Jury Trials in Winnebago County](#)

Please stay home if you should be sick on the day you are required to appear in court. If you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the court you are to appear in; we are all happy to assist in any way possible.

We are all in this together.

Sincerely,

Melissa M. Pingel

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