

April 2, 2020

RE: District Court Protocols re: COVID19

Dear Teton County Bar Association:

Thank you for your efforts supporting your clients and their cases as the practice of law and judicial operations entered a new era. The resilience and versatility of our legal community during a period of rapid change has been impressive. You are essential to the rule of law.

The following is an update to the District Court's protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. These reflect the recent Wyoming Supreme Court's orders and Teton County's orders regarding access to the Teton County Courthouse. You can continue to find more information at the Clerk of District Court's website and the Wyoming Supreme Court's website. The Wyoming Supreme Court website includes drop-down menus for the COVID-19 protocols and related orders in each of Wyoming's district courts. The Notice and Order currently posted on the Teton County courthouse door which you or your clients may encounter is also attached to this email.

Access to the Courthouse

1. Access to the courthouse remains restricted through April 20. On March 31, 2020 the Teton County Board of County Commissioners voted to extend the closure of all Teton County public buildings, including the courthouse, through April 20, 2020. Offices within the building remain open although each office has remote operations in place, in whole or in part. Staff in the agencies and courts located in the Courthouse may conduct in-person business with the public by appointment only, and one case at a time. In accordance with that decision, the Teton County Sheriff's Office has locked the doors to the courthouse. If you need access to the courthouse, please contact the office you need to visit to make arrangements.

Electronic Filing

2. The Clerk of District Court's Office continues to encourage the use of fax filing and e-mail filing and has waived the filing fees and page limits. Please contact the Clerk of District Court's office for instructions.

Hearings and Trials

3. The District Court converted all hearings to video or telephone hearings beginning the week of March 16. Our first evidentiary hearings were held by video conference the same week. The Court appreciates the patience of counsel and the parties during the first few hearings. Subsequent hearings have continued to improve. The Court has a protocol for video hearings and the presentation of evidence at them. The Court now offers remote training opportunities for counsel in advance of the hearings. Video hearings allow for the criminal and civil justice systems to continue to operate. If your matter is set for a video hearing, you will receive an order of the protocols and that order includes the instructions for training opportunities.
4. All hearings scheduled in the District Court, remain set as scheduled at this time. However, we will be contacting you to reset those as telephone or video hearings. This applies to most civil matters. Many criminal proceedings will also be conducted by video. However, some

criminal and juvenile matters are required by statute to occur in person. We will be in touch with counsel directly if any of those hearings need to be scheduled during the pandemic. No in-person hearings have been held and are going to be avoided until further notice.

5. For those criminal defendants and indigent litigants without access to internet, cellular data, or any electronic devices, the Court has installed a Wifi hotspot adjacent to the courthouse and has a device that litigants may borrow for hearings. The device is sanitized before and after use. Counsel should contact the District Court's Judicial Assistant in advance of any hearing if this device will be needed so appropriate arrangements can be made.
6. If you have an upcoming hearing that you and your clients believe should not occur by video or telephone, and that should instead be delayed to a later date, please submit a joint or stipulated motion to reset that hearing, with a proposed order.
7. Non-essential civil jury trials, and criminal trials where speedy trial has been waived, shall be continued as needed. All civil and criminal jury trials will be continued until further notice based on the Wyoming Supreme Court's April 1 order directing trials to be continued until after May 31. Counsel involved in any pending trials will be contacted directly.
8. Court staff is largely working remotely. If the Court Reporter is needed to report a civil hearing, the three-day notice should also be sent to the Court Reporter by email at loviatt@courts.state.wy.us.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let us know. Thank you again for your resilience and adaptability in support of your clients and the continuity of the criminal and civil justice systems.

Timothy C. Day
District Judge
9th Judicial District Court
P.O. Box 1036
180 S. King St.
Jackson, WY 83001
307/733-1461