

## **Response to COVID-19 and Related Coronavirus (Judge Gotsch):**

Effective November 1, 2020, and continuing through and including June 30, 2021 (unless otherwise modified or enlarged), based on the General Orders 2020-08 and 2020-29 of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael G. Gotsch, Sr., has adopted the following policies to mitigate the exposure, transmission, and spread of all versions of coronavirus:

- (1) Everyone is encouraged to conduct necessary court business through electronic or telephonic means.
- (2) Anyone entering the Courthouse is encouraged to follow the precautions outlined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which may be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>.
- (3) Unless otherwise ordered, all civil court proceedings (including without limitation, hearings, pretrial conferences, and Rule 16(b) conferences) shall be conducted by telephone or teleconference.
- (4) Unless otherwise ordered, all settlement conferences shall be conducted remotely by Zoom, Cisco Jabber, CourtCall, or a similar video-teleconference application.
- (5) Civil jury trials may be scheduled for a time when the coronavirus does not pose a significant health threat to jurors, litigants, attorneys, and court staff.
- (6) With the consent of individual defendants, all initial appearance, arraignment, detention, and plea hearings in criminal cases shall be conducted by video-teleconference (VTC).
- (7) With respect to detention hearings, the parties are directed to confer and advise the Court if an in-person detention will be waived by the defendant, or whether either party is seeking a continuance of the hearing. A defendant who does not object to detention should, before the date of the detention hearing, notify chambers either orally (through counsel) or in writing that the defendant has no objection to detention and is waiving the detention hearing. Any such waiver would be without prejudice to the court's reconsideration of the issue of pretrial release at a later date.

- (8) For any in-person hearings scheduled by the Court, everyone in the courtroom shall comply with the CDC recommendation of maintaining a social distancing of six-to-ten feet between individuals and wearing face coverings.
- (9) The Court strongly suggests that attorneys, litigants, witnesses, jurors, and members of the general public contact the Clerks' office (574-246-8000) or Court chambers before visiting the Robert A. Grant Federal Building and Courthouse.
- (10) The United States Marshal Service is authorized to adopt any necessary procedures and/or protocols to implement these Court directives.
- (11) The Court Security Officers are authorized and directed to maintain appropriate social distancing, and compliance with these directives during in-person hearings.