

Procedures in Response to COVID-19 Related Coronavirus Magistrate Judge Kolar

Effective March 17, 2020, and continuing through and including May 1, 2020 (unless otherwise ordered), based on the General Order Regarding Court Operations Under the Exigent Circumstances Created by COVID-19 and Related Coronavirus ([2020-05](#)), U.S. Magistrate Judge Joshua P. Kolar 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. 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>.
- (2) All settlement conferences presently scheduled to occur between March 17 and May 1, 2020, are vacated and shall be rescheduled to a date after May 15, 2020.
- (3) All civil court proceedings (including without limitation, hearings, pretrial conferences, and Rule 16(b) conferences) shall be conducted by telephone or teleconference.
- (4) With the consent of individual defendants, all initial appearances and arraignment hearings in criminal cases shall be conducted by video-teleconference (VTC).
- (5) For 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. 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.

- (6) For any in-person hearings, everyone in the courtroom shall comply with the CDC recommendation of maintaining a social distancing of six-to-ten feet between individuals.
- (7) The Court strongly suggests that attorneys, litigants, witnesses, jurors, and members of the general public contact the Clerks' office (219-852-6500) or Court chambers before visiting the Federal Building and Courthouse.
- (8) The United States Marshal Service is authorized to adopt any necessary procedures and/or protocols to implement these Court directives.
- (9) The Court Security Officers are authorized and directed to maintain appropriate social distancing, and compliance with these directives during in-person hearings.