



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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Trial Courts Ordered to Limit Activity to Essential Functions

Courts also ordered to limit access to courtrooms to no more than 10 persons

LANSING, MI, March 18, 2020 – In [Administrative Order 2020-2](#), the Michigan Supreme Court has ordered all trial courts statewide “to limit access to courtrooms and other spaces to no more than 10 persons, including staff, and to practice social distancing and limit court activity to only essential functions.” Previously, [Administrative Order 2020-1](#) instructed courts to take reasonable measures to avoid exposing individuals to COVID-19.

“All trial courts must take immediate action to protect the public and court personnel by limiting activity only to essential functions,” said Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack. “The Supreme Court speaks with one, decisive voice: Courts must respond so that the policy is uniform all across Michigan.”

Essential functions include arraignments for in-custody defendants, review and determination of requests for search warrants and personal protection orders, certain child protective proceedings, and critical issues regarding child support and child custody, among others as specified in the order. The new order also provides courts with additional flexibility to conduct business using technology such as video and telephone conferencing.

The order cited the Court’s authority in the Michigan Constitution that provides for the general superintending control over all state courts. In addition, the order cited [Executive Order 2020-11](#) in which Governor Whitmer ordered restrictions on assemblages to no more than 50 people and [White House guidelines](#) announced by President Trump urging the public to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.

Starting on March 12, the U.S. Supreme Court closed the court to the public and many state supreme courts – including Indiana, Ohio, New Jersey, New York, and North Carolina, among others – have also directed courts to only address essential functions and to limit public access to court facilities in order to slow the spread of the virus.

Visit the [Judiciary Response to COVID-19 page](#) for additional information and details regarding individual courts.

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