

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS

IN RE: COURT OPERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2021-4

In response to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the Western District of Arkansas, the Court continued all civil and criminal trials within the district until further order of the Court. In light of the increasing availability of the COVID-19 vaccine within the district and the increasing percentage of fully vaccinated individuals, the moratorium on such trials previously entered in Administrative Order Nos. 2020-1, 2020-4, 2020-5, 2020-8, 2020-11, 2020-14, 2021-1 and 2021-3 is hereby lifted as of May 17, 2021.

All civil and criminal trials (bench and jury) currently scheduled to begin before May 17, 2021 are continued and will be rescheduled by the presiding judge.

As to criminal trials, the time between the date of this administrative order and the new trial date shall be excluded from consideration of the Speedy Trial Act pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), as the Court specifically finds that the ends of justice served by ordering these continuances outweigh the best interests of the public and a defendant's right to a speedy trial.

Criminal matters before a Magistrate Judge, such as initial appearances, arraignments, detention hearings, and the issuance of search warrants, shall take place either by video conference or in person, as scheduled by the presiding judge.

Change of plea and sentencing hearings shall take place either by video conference or in person, as scheduled by the presiding judge.

All civil hearings and other court proceedings, including settlement conferences, shall take place either by video conference or in person, as scheduled by the presiding judge.

All courthouses within the Western District of Arkansas are open to the public.

In order to reduce the COVID-19 health risks to potential jurors, witnesses, parties, attorneys, the public, court staff, judges and other court agencies, Center of Disease Control (CDC) protocol, including the wearing of face masks and social distancing, will be followed in all courthouses within the Western District of Arkansas.

This Order will remain in effect until further order of the Court.

IT IS SO ORDERED, this 22nd day of April, 2021.



SUSAN O. HICKEY
CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE