

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND**

**GENERAL ORDER REGARDING
CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

Due to the declaration of a pandemic/public health emergency, the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island will take the following steps to maintain operations, while mitigating employees' and the public's exposure to and spread of the harmful virus.

1. The U.S. Courthouse building at One Exchange Terrace is closed to the public until further notice.
2. The Court operations in the John O. Pastore Building ("Pastore Building") will be closed Tuesdays and Thursdays; and will be open for limited purposes only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.
3. The presiding judge's case manager will cancel all in-person civil matters, and instead, where possible, arrange hearings to be conducted telephonically.
4. All grand jury proceedings and all on-going criminal hearings will be continued unless the Defendant's liberty interests are involved, and if so, matters will be handled in the Pastore Building by judges and personnel on the days it is open. The time period of the continuances implemented by this General Order will be excluded under the Speedy Trial Act, as the Court specifically finds that the ends of justice served by ordering the continuances outweigh the best interests of the public and any Defendant's right to a speedy trial, under 18 U.S.C. § 3161 (h)(7)(A);

5. All permanent employees are expected to telework their regular hours and conduct any specific other duties at the Courthouse as required.
6. The Clerk's Office phone will be forwarded to a daily duty member of the Clerk's Office. The Court will post a sign at the entrances to the Courthouse directing people to electronic communications with the Court, or to call the Clerk's Office number for further directions as necessary.
7. The Court will take necessary procedures for handling any emergency matters. Parties, attorneys, the public, or the press can call the Clerk's Office at 401-752-7200 to arrange.

The Court will fully continue its mission of dispensing justice efficiently and effectively throughout this pandemic/public health emergency, and in particular: (1) activities necessary to support the exercise of the Article III judicial power; (2) activities to support rights guaranteed by the Constitution; and (3) emergency proceedings necessary for the safety of human life and the protection of property. Thanks to the strategic planning and foresight of the administrative team in our Court—the Clerk's Office, our IT Department, Probation and Pretrial Office—and the incredible partnership and cooperation we have with the U.S. Marshals Service and the bar, our Court is capable of fully functioning and being operational while we contribute to the community's response to this public health emergency.

This Order is effective beginning Monday, March 16, 2020. The Court will periodically review the Order and it remains in effect until it is found to be safe to remove or alter this Order.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

By the Court:

March 13, 2020

/s/ John J. McConnell Jr., Chief Judge