

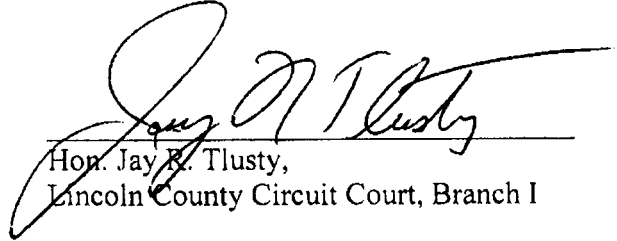
ADDENDUM AND MODIFICATION TO THE OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR THE CIRCUIT  
COURTS OF LINCOLN COUNTY, WISCONSIN

As an addendum to the Safety Plan dated July 14, 2020 and the Operational Plan dated March 19, 2021 and revised on April 29, 2021, both approved by Chief Judge Greg Huber, the Circuit Courts for Lincoln County, Wisconsin will implement the following modifications to these plans:


1. Judges and court staff shall perform their functions in the courtroom, as of July 1, 2021.
2. Judges, court staff and all other individuals in the courtroom shall not be required to wear face coverings if vaccinated. Everyone in a courtroom will have the right to wear a mask if they so choose.
3. All court hearings will be conducted in person as of July 1, 2021, with the following exceptions:
  - a. Appearance via video conferencing will be available to any interested party upon timely request and approval by the Court.
  - b. In custody defendants will continue to appear by Zoom video conference.
  - c. The Court will continue to hear the following matters by Zoom video conference:
    - Victim's rights scheduling/status conferences;
    - Traffic intake
    - Ch. 51 cases except upon prior request for an in-person hearing;
    - Any hearing that has already been noticed on as a Zoom hearing through August 31, 2021.
4. Social distancing shall not be required in the courtroom, though attorneys, litigants and the general public are encouraged to do so as space may permit.
5. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available in each courtroom.
6. The jury trial addendum will remain in effect until further order of the Court.

7. Lincoln County Judges reserve the right to order additional modifications or amendments as needed to ensure the health and safety of jurors, litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges and other individuals participating in court appearances and jury trials.

Dated: 6/15/21

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hon. Jay R. Tlusty,  
Lincoln County Circuit Court, Branch I

Dated: 6/15/21

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hon. Robert R. Russell,  
Lincoln County Circuit Court, Branch II

**STATE OF WISCONSIN NINTH JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT**

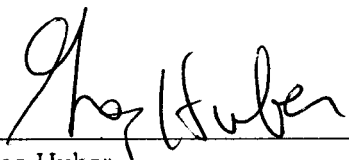
**ORDER APPROVING MODIFICATION BY ADDENDUM**

of

**Operational Plan in Lincoln County**

Pursuant to the Wisconsin Supreme Court's Order dated May 21, 2021, and at the request of the Hon. Jay R. Tlusty, Presiding Judge in Lincoln County, for the modification by addendum of Lincoln County's Safety Plan dated July 14, 2020, and the Operational Plan dated March 19, 2021 and revised on April 29, 2021 as being in the best interest of the residents of Lincoln County, it is hereby ordered that the Operational Plan is modified.

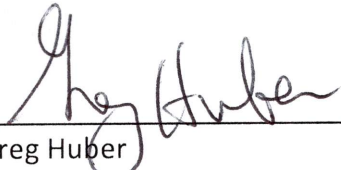
Effective this 15<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hon. Greg Huber  
Chief Judge, 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

ORDER APPROVING CONTINUATION  
of  
OPERATIONAL PLAN IN LINCOLN COUNTY

Pursuant to the Wisconsin Supreme Order dated May 21, 2021, and at the request of the Hon. Jay Tlusty, Presiding Judge in Lincoln County, for the continuation of Lincoln County's March 19<sup>th</sup>, and modified on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Operational Plan as being in the best interest of the residents of Lincoln County, it is hereby ordered that the Operational Plan is continued.

Effective this 28<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hon. Greg Huber  
Chief Judge, 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

# LINCOLN COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

Lincoln County Courthouse

▪ 1110 E. Main Street ▪

Merrill, WI 54452-2579

**HONORABLE JAY R. TLUSTY**  
Circuit Court Judge Branch I

**HONORABLE ROBERT R. RUSSELL**  
Circuit Court Judge Branch II

CHARLOTTE KRAUSE  
Judicial Assistant  
(715)536-0343  
FAX (715)536-0468

NATALIE L. WEGNER  
Judicial Assistant  
(715)536-0416  
FAX (715)536-0407

MICHELLE LIVINGSTON  
Court Reporter  
(715)-536-0345

MARISSA L. PRAHL  
Court Reporter  
(715)536-0415

MARIE A. PETERSON  
Clerk of Circuit Court  
(715)536-0319

BECKY S. BYER  
Register in Probate  
Clerk of Juvenile Court  
(715)536-0342

May 28, 2021

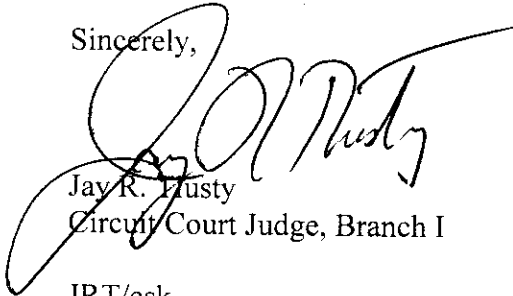
Honorable Greg Huber  
Chief Judge, Ninth Judicial District  
Marathon County Courthouse  
500 Forest Street  
Wausau, WI 54403

RE: Lincoln County Operational Plan

Dear Judge Huber,

Judge Russell and I have decided to continue our operational plan dated March 19, 2021 and revised on April 29, 2021, which had been approved by you. We may make amendments to the plan at a later date.

Sincerely,



Jay R. Tlusty  
Circuit Court Judge, Branch I

JRT/csk

cc: Honorable Robert R. Russell

**STATE OF WISCONSIN**

**9<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

**LINCOLN COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

THE ATTACHED

**COVID-19 CIRCUIT COURT SAFETY PLAN FOR LINCOLN COUNTY**

DATED JULY 14, 2020, AND APPROVED JULY 17, 2020

WHEN COMBINED WITH THE ATTACHED

**COVID-19 CIRCUIT COURT OPERATING PLAN FOR LINCOLN COUNTY:  
ADDENDUM: JURY TRIAL PLAN**

DATED MARCH 19, 2021 AND REVISED APRIL 29, 2021.

CONSTITUTE THE

**OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR THE SAFE RESUMPTION OF  
IN-PERSON PROCEEDINGS AND JURY TRIALS IN  
LINCOLN COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

## **Lincoln County Stakeholder's Group Members**

Becky Byer, Lincoln County Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court

Bonnie Wachsmuth, Family Court Commissioner

Brian Haffemann, Court Security Officer

Charlotte Krause, Judicial Assistant, Branch I

Dave Manninen, Lincoln County Jail Administrator

Galen Bayne-Allison, Lincoln County District Attorney

Gerald Hersil, Court Commissioner & President of Lincoln County Bar Association

James Koppelman, Court Commissioner

Cate Wylie, New Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator

Jason Hake, Former Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator

Jay R. Tlusty, Circuit Court Judge, Branch I

Jessica Fehrenbach, State Public Defender

John Van Lieshout, Lincoln County IT Department Representative

Ken Schneider, Lincoln County Sheriff

Marie Peterson, Lincoln County Clerk of Court

Michael Hamann, Bailiff

Michelle Hubbard, Supervisor, Division of Community Corrections

Karry Johnson, New Lincoln County Corporation Counsel (As of 03-29-2021)

Nancy Bergstrom, Former Lincoln County Corporation Counsel

Natalie Wegner, Judicial Assistant, Branch II

Nate Walrath, Lincoln County Chief Deputy

Patrick Gierl, Lincoln County Maintenance Director

Robert R. Russell, Circuit Court Judge, Branch II

September Murphy, Director, Lincoln County Emergency Management

Shelley Hersil, Director, Lincoln County Health Department

Susan Byrnes, 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Administrator

Wright Laufenberg, Court Commissioner

# **COVID-19 Circuit Court Safety Plan for Lincoln County**

## **Phases One and Two – 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District**

### **(Does not include Jury Trials)**

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the Lincoln County Courthouse, the courts of Lincoln County will implement the following protective measures:

#### **General**

1. The county judiciary has established a stakeholder's group, with sub groups, to discuss and consider the recommendations outlined in the Wisconsin Courts COVID- 19 Task Force Report (May, 2020). The group and sub groups of it have met to discuss and consider the recommendations outlined in the Wisconsin Courts COVID-19 Task Force Report and will continue to meet. The procedures and practices that follow were developed with the intent to be proactive, recognizing the need to provide all constitutional and statutory protections to the litigants and interested parties, as well as the public's right to access. It is understood that it is not possible to ensure absolute safety, but expected to take reasonable and necessary precautions to protect the health of all participants within the physical limitations of the facilities and resources of the courts and the county.
2. In order to limit the number of persons in the courtrooms, it is the intent of the judiciary that every judge will use best efforts to continue to conduct all appropriate proceedings remotely.
3. Before calendaring in-person hearings, with input from the stakeholder's group, the circuit courts for Lincoln County have addressed staffing needs and have procured any equipment and supplies deemed necessary. It is understood that the availability of equipment and supplies is fluid given ongoing supply and demand issues. The circuit courts for Lincoln County, in cooperation with Lincoln County, will use best efforts to secure that which is necessary to satisfy the requirements of this plan.
4. The stakeholder's group and its sub groups will meet regularly, and will adjust this safety plan as necessary.
5. Judges will begin setting in-person proceedings no sooner than July 20, 2020.

#### **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely may continue to do so, whenever possible subject to Lincoln County Personnel Policy (where applicable) and state court policies (where applicable).
2. In accordance with the Supreme Court Order dated May 22, 2020, judges and court staff and all individuals in the courtrooms or downstairs conference rooms will be required to wear face coverings as specified therein, practice social distancing, and practice hygiene recommendations. Signage incorporating these requirements will be posted in appropriate locations to ensure notice and compliance.



### **Scheduling**

1. Judges will use best efforts to conduct proceedings remotely and will only schedule in person proceedings as determined by the Judge taking into consideration constitutional and statutory requirements, the nature of the proceedings and requests of the attorneys and litigants.
2. Court staff will use staggered scheduling of in person proceedings and other appropriate methods to reduce the number of individuals in a courtroom at one time.

### **Vulnerable Populations**

1. Upon advance notice, Judges will use best efforts to accommodate vulnerable persons who are scheduled for court by offering remote access via Zoom video and phone conferencing and staggering scheduling to limit the number of individuals in the courtroom. If such accommodations cannot be met, reasonable adjournments may be made.
2. For purposes of this section, vulnerable persons are individuals identified by the CDC (or anyone cohabitating or working with vulnerable populations).

### **Social Distancing**

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the Courthouse will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet. Signage reminders will be displayed throughout the facilities in appropriate locations to ensure notice and compliance.
2. Posted signage will direct that no more than one person will be allowed on the elevator at the same time unless they are from the same household.
3. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored by the court staff and enforced by court security or judge.
4. The gallery of each courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.
5. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk, and court reporter seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space where possible.

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer has been placed at strategic locations throughout the courthouse.
2. Hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes or spray, and toweling have been placed in a disinfectant cleaning station set up in each courtroom. Signage will be posted in each courtroom as to availability of these items in the courtroom.
3. Posters outlining appropriate hygiene, social distancing, or public safety have been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the courthouse.

### Screening

1. Signage posted at public entrances of the courthouse will encourage individuals to wear a face covering when not in the courtroom, and give notice that they are to immediately exit the building and be available by phone if they have any of the following (per CDC guidelines): Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. If an individual must leave and was required to appear in court, the Judge may grant a reasonable adjournment upon being notified and after consideration of the individual's circumstances.
2. Inmates being transported to the courthouse will be screened by law enforcement for symptoms of COVID-19, and will not be transported to the courthouse if they exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms.

### Face Coverings

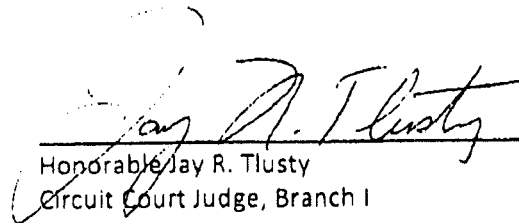
1. In accordance with the Supreme Court Order dated May 22, 2020, judges and court staff and all individuals in the courtrooms or downstairs conference rooms will be required to wear face coverings as specified therein. Signage incorporating these requirements will be displayed in appropriate locations to ensure notice and compliance. Noncompliance will be enforced by the courts contempt powers.
2. Individuals coming to court will be strongly encouraged to bring their own face coverings with them. For individuals required to appear in court, orders to appear and docket notices will include the notice of the requirement of face coverings in accordance with the Supreme Court Order dated May 22, 2020. In the event an individual required to appear in court and whose matter can only be heard in person fails to bring or have a face covering, one will be provided by the county. Each branch has received 2000 face masks from the State for the public, as well as reusable masks for court personnel. Signage will be posted as to the availability of a face covering.

### Other


1. Additional measures that have been implemented:
  - a. In addition to the courtrooms, sanitation stations have been placed in the jury rooms and office areas by the Lincoln County Maintenance Department.
  - b. Plexiglas has been placed in all three courtrooms.
  - c. Soft surface chairs and chair cushions have been removed from public access
  - d. The number of chairs in each courtroom have been limited.
  - e. All pleadings, including but not limited to Plea Questionnaires, Statements of Negotiated Plea, Waiver of Preliminary Hearing, and Waiver of Right to an Attorney, shall be filed before the hearing.
  - f. Clerks will be responsible for sanitation of chairs, tables, and microphones utilized by attorneys and litigants at the end of each hearing, if not done by the litigants and attorneys.
  - g. Microphone coverings have been obtained and will be changed after each hearing by the clerk.
  - h. Face shields may be used when appropriate.

- i. Doors to each courtroom will remain open when appropriate and feasible given the type of hearing, individuals in the hallways of the courthouse, and court security considerations.
2. This safety plan is not applicable to jury trials. An operational plan will be prepared for subsequent approval and implementation.
3. It is understood that public awareness of these measures is necessary. This information will be shared on state and county websites and through state and local bar associations.
4. In developing the Safety Plan, we have consulted with each other and with the Stakeholders Group. A list of members in the Stakeholders Group and the Sub Groups is attached to this plan.

Date: 7/14/2020

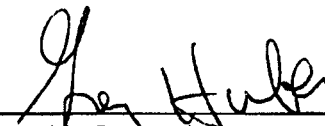
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Honorable Jay R. Tlusty  
Circuit Court Judge, Branch I

Date: 7/14/2020

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Honorable Robert R. Russell  
Circuit Court Judge, Branch II

CHIEF JUDGE APPROVAL:

Date: 7/17/2020

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Honorable Greg Huber  
Chief Judge 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

## Lincoln County Stakeholder's Group Members

Becky Byer, Lincoln County Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court  
Bonnie Wachsmuth, Family Court Commissioner  
Brian Haffemann, Court Security Officer  
Charlotte Krause, Judicial Assistant, Branch I  
Dave Manninen, Lincoln County Jail Administrator  
Galen Bayne-Allison, Lincoln County District Attorney  
Gerald Hersil, Court Commissioner & President of Lincoln County Bar Association  
James Koppelman, Court Commissioner  
Jason Hake, Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator  
Jay R. Tlusty, Circuit Court Judge, Branch I  
Jessica Fehrenbach, State Public Defender  
John Van Lieshout, Lincoln County IT Department Representative  
Ken Schneider, Lincoln County Sheriff  
Marie Peterson, Lincoln County Clerk of Court  
Michael Hamann, Bailiff  
Michelle Hubbard, Supervisor, Division of Community Corrections  
Nancy Bergstrom, Lincoln County Corporation Counsel  
Natalie Wegner, Judicial Assistant, Branch II  
Nate Walrath, Lincoln County Chief Deputy  
Patrick Gierl, Lincoln County Maintenance Director  
Robert R. Russell, Circuit Court Judge, Branch II  
September Murphy, Director, Lincoln County Emergency Management  
Shelley Hersil, Director, Lincoln County Health Department  
Susan Byrnes, 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Administrator  
Wright Laufenberg, Court Commissioner

### Staffing Sub Group

Marie Peterson, Chairperson  
Becky Byer  
Jason Hake

### Facilities and Equipment Sub Group

Patrick Gierl, Chairperson	September Murphy
Brian Haffemann	Ken Schneider or his designee
Shelley Hersil	

### In-Person Re-Engagement Sub Group

Becky Byer, Chairperson	Jessica Fehrenbach	Marie Peterson
Natalie Wegner	Gerald Hersil	Michelle Hubbard
Charlotte Krause	Galen Bayne-Allison	Bonnie Wachsmuth

### Jury Trials Sub Group

Wright Laufenberg, Chairperson	James Koppelman	Dawn Dunbar
Nancy Bergstrom	Mike Hamann	John Van Lieshout
Galen Bayne-Allison	Jessica Fehrenbach	

# COVID-19 Circuit Court Operating Plan for Lincoln County

## Addendum: Jury Trial Plan

As an addendum to the Safety Plan approved by the Chief Judge of the Judicial District on July 17, 2020, this plan is developed to ensure the health and safety of jurors, litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals participating in jury trials. The courts of Lincoln County will implement the following additional protective measures related to jury trials:

### **Recovery Planning and General Education**

1. A recovery planning, jury committee including the following stakeholders, has been established:
  - a. Wright Laufenberg, Court Commissioner
  - b. Nancy Bergstrom, Former Lincoln County Corporation Counsel
  - c. Galen Bayne-Allison, Lincoln County District Attorney
  - d. Jessica Fehrenbach, State Public Defender
  - e. Marie Peterson, Lincoln County Clerk of Court
  - f. Mike Hamman, Lincoln County Jury Bailiff
  - g. James Koppelman, Court Commissioner
  - h. John Van Lieshout, Lincoln County IT Department Representative
2. Efforts have been undertaken to educate the general public on the importance of jury service and the specific precautions taken in the county with respect to public safety and ensuring the safety of jurors during the pandemic. The Safety Plan has been posted on the Lincoln County Website. The Addendum regarding jury trials will also be posted on the Lincoln County Website.

### **Summoning and Selection of Jurors**

1. Considerations have been made for the safety and wellbeing of jurors. The attached letter was developed and will be sent with the juror summons to each juror.
2. The policy regarding deferral and excusal of jurors is unchanged due to the pandemic. Health concerns and family situations which may affect the jurors' ability to serve will be considered on an individual basis.
3. The following protective measures, including staggered entrance into the building where jury selection will occur and the courthouse, check-in that minimizes physical contact with documents, temperature readings by the bailiffs, posting notice regarding hygiene and social distancing practices are in place for jurors who report to court.

4. Jurors will be instructed to remain in their vehicles until court personnel contact them by phone or in person to come into the building where jury selection or the trial is occurring.
5. When jurors attempt to enter the building where jury selection will occur and the courthouse, court staff will read individuals screening questions developed by the Lincoln County Health Department and will ask jurors if they would answer "yes" to any question without requiring disclosure as to which question. Individuals who would indicate yes to any one of these questions will be refused admittance and the Clerk of Court and Judge will be immediately notified. A copy of the screening questions are attached and may be revised by the Lincoln County Health Department.
6. The following strategies will be used to reduce the number of people required to report for jury selection: Utilize preselection questionnaires in appropriate cases, conduct voir dire in an off site facility or use multiple courtrooms with Zoom capabilities to allow appropriate social distancing, provide a detailed letter to jurors in advance of jury selection that includes COVID screening questions, and "strikes for cause" based on juror health and safety concerns will be given priority.

#### **Juror Attendance and Safe Participation**

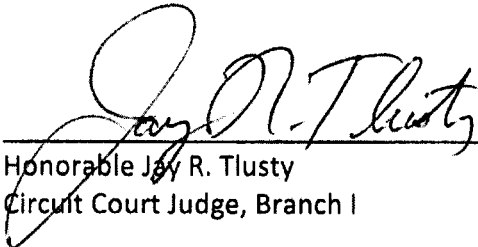
1. Personal protective equipment will be available to the jurors, including face coverings, hand sanitizer and gloves, if exhibits are handled by the jurors.
2. Social distancing of jurors will be enforced through the following strategies: Staggering entrance and exit from the courthouse, limiting the capacity in the courtroom, marking off spaces 6 ft. apart within the courtroom and jury box, re-configuring placement of counsel tables, and installation of plexiglas barriers. Not all jurors will be placed in the jury box to achieve social distancing.
3. After the jury has been empaneled, efforts will be made to accommodate social distancing, but ensure that each juror has adequate sight lines to the witness stand and can hear and see all proceedings. Examples of such accommodations include: rearranging the courtroom to distance jurors, turning counsel tables, using technology to display exhibits, and installation of plexiglas barriers.
4. Social distancing consideration during trial breaks and deliberations include everyone leaving the courtroom so the jurors are by themselves in the courtroom. Jurors will have designated seats, and jurors will be divided between the courtroom and the jury deliberation rooms with social distancing during breaks so they can remove their face coverings to drink and eat. Food and drinks will be packaged in individual containers. Hand sanitizer will be provided and bathroom capacity will be handled by the jury bailiffs to ensure social distancing. For notetaking, the jurors will be given a notepad and sanitized pen, which they will retain during the trial.

5. After consultation with the judge, the district attorney, clerk of court, and other applicable counsel involved with cases in this county, jury trials with time limits will be prioritized. All other jury trials will be scheduled according to usual practices.
6. Jury selection will take place the day prior to the trial's commencement to allow additional time and avoid deliberations into the evening hours, unless it is relatively certain that the entire trial, including jury selection can be conducted in one day without deliberations into the evening hours.
7. When a jury trial is scheduled both Judicial Assistants and the Clerk of Court or her designee will participate to ensure that both Branch 1 and Branch 2 are available for the jury trial and that Branch 3 is available for intake on the days of the trial and if jury selection is taking place at the courthouse, on the day of jury selection.
8. For all scheduled jury trials, a pre-trial conference shall be held approximately fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled jury trial to further consider the logistics of safely conducting the jury trial and for the court to excuse jurors for cause based on the responses to the juror questionnaire. The litigants and their attorneys shall be present. The final pre-trial conference shall be scheduled using Zoom unless an in-person appearance is requested by the court or any party.
9. For all scheduled jury trials, a status conference shall be held approximately six (6) weeks prior to the scheduled jury trial and in any case prior to the date on which juror summons will go out for the trial for the court to approve the juror questionnaire and consider any trial-specific changes to the standard procedures for conducting the trial. The litigants and their attorneys shall be present. The status conference shall be conducted by Zoom unless an in-person appearance is requested by the court or any party.
10. Due to possible capacity issues within the courtroom, Zoom accommodations will be provided for viewing of the proceedings by those eligible to view the proceedings based upon the type of case.
11. Jury trials will only be conducted in the Branch 1 Courtroom given the small size of the Branch 2 Courtroom. The Branch 2 Courtroom will be the location for public and overflow access to the proceedings. The Branch 1 and Branch 2 Courtrooms will be connected by Zoom or other audiovisual means so that those in Branch 2 can observe the proceedings in Branch 1.
12. Conferences and motions outside the presence of the jury will be held with the parties, attorneys, judge, and staff leaving the courtroom, exercising social distancing, and holding the matter in either the Branch 2 or Branch 3 Courtroom.

13. On multi-day jury trials, maintenance staff will be required to thoroughly clean all areas used for the jury trial, in addition to cleaning during the jury selection or trial if requested by any participant regardless of the length of the trial.
14. Notices regarding the availability of hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes/sprays in different locations of the courthouse will be posted at the entrance of each courtroom, jury room, and court related confined space.

Lincoln County is a two judge county. We have communicated with the Clerk of the Circuit Court, with representatives of the County, with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department, the District Attorney's Office, and the local office of the State Public Defender through numerous meetings with the Lincoln County Stakeholder's Group. The list of the members on the Lincoln County Stakeholder's Group are part of this Operational Plan. Jury Trials will be held no sooner than May 2021. We will ensure that visiting judges conducting jury trials in Lincoln County will conduct proceedings consistent with the Jury Trial Plan set forth in this Addendum.


Date: 4/29/2021



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Honorable Jay R. Tlusty  
Circuit Court Judge, Branch I

Date: 4/29/2021



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Honorable Robert R. Russell  
Circuit Court Judge, Branch II



Dear Prospective Juror,

You have been selected as a prospective juror for **month of June**. In anticipation of your jury service, this letter will provide you with information on the safety and precautionary measures taken by Lincoln County to keep all participants safe as well as what to expect during this process.

**Courthouse Safety Measures:**

- Face coverings are required at all times in the courthouse.
- Face masks, hand sanitizer and cleaners are available throughout the courthouse.
- Social distancing of six (6) feet will be enforced by security and courthouse personnel. Seating may be assigned.
- Courtrooms, jury rooms, elevators, bathrooms, and other commonly touched areas will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.

**Reporting/Check-In Process:**

Have your Juror ID number available. This number can be found on the top right hand side of your summons. This number will be your identification number when you call the jury message line or utilize online services to check your status. The number is: (715) 536-0337. You may use this number after 12:00 p.m. on the designated date(s) on your summons.

Please leave your name & Juror ID number when prompted or you may check the message at [juror.wicourts.gov](http://juror.wicourts.gov). Your Juror ID will be used frequently throughout this process/month. Again, please have it available when prompted. Follow the instructions accordingly.

We ask that you arrive at your designated time. Arrival times will be staggered for your safety and to complete the screening process. Things to consider:

- Remain in your vehicle until your designated arrival time (or enjoy your surroundings, grab a cup of coffee, window shop, etc.)
- Review the provided health screening questions (attached). These will be asked upon your arrival.
- Your temperature will be taken.
- After you have been screened, Courthouse personnel will direct you to your assigned location.
- Dress comfortably BUT appropriately for the courtroom setting. Temperatures can fluctuate in a historical building. Dress accordingly.

**Please do not bring:**

- Smartphones, iPads, or similar electronic devices, books, food/beverages, and all other personal items.
- If you bring your electronic device into the courthouse or any off-site facility, a bailiff will collect your electronic device and hold it during your juror service for that day. We recommend you leave these items in your vehicle.

- Weapons are not allowed on the premises i.e. knives, guns, box cutters, etc.

**Provided at the Courthouse:**

- Hand sanitizer
- Masks; however, you may bring your own reusable face covering.
- Notepad and pencil
- Water and snacks will be provided. Please contact the Clerk of Court if you have special dietary needs. Meals will be provided during deliberation only.

If you require assistance, or special accommodations, please notify the Clerk of Court in advance. If you require a hearing assistance device, one will be provided to you upon request.

If you are experiencing symptoms identified by the CDC of the Coronavirus, have begun caring for a family member or loved one who has tested positive for the Coronavirus, or are now in self-quarantine status which would continue on DATE OF SELECTION, please contact the Clerk of Court. If you are sick, please do not report but contact the Clerk to notify her of your absence.

The current state of this health pandemic has necessitated major adjustments and adaptations to the way that we all live. It is of the utmost importance that the right to a trial by jury be available to our citizens to promote the continuation of an impartial justice system. Lincoln County continues to be dedicated to finding the balance between providing this right while also protecting the health of all involved in the process.

Only the Judge has the authority to excuse you from jury duty. If you wish to be excused please write a letter to **Judge Russell** at 1110 E. Main St., Merrill WI 54452. You will need to specify, in writing, why you wish to be excused.

Thank you for your time, willingness to serve and cooperation. Your service as a juror is important and appreciated. We look forward to working with you. Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Marie Peterson  
Clerk of Circuit Courts  
(715) 536-0422  
marie.peterson@wicourts.gov

## Screening Questions for Potential Jurors

### Developed by the Lincoln County Health Department

1. Have you been tested in the past 30 days for COVID?
2. Have you been told by a healthcare professional you are positive for COVID in the past 30 days?
3. Have you been notified by a health department you were a close contact to a positive case in the past 30 days? If yes, did you stay home for the 14 day requirement?
4. Have you actively cared for or shared the same living space with someone who has tested positive for COVID in the past 30 days?
5. Are you currently experiencing any of the following symptoms:
  - a. Fever (100.4)
  - b. Cough
  - c. Sore Throat
  - d. Runny Nose
  - e. Shortness of Breath
  - f. Headache
  - g. Chills
  - h. Muscle Aches
  - i. Abdominal Pain
  - j. Nausea
  - k. Vomiting
  - l. Diarrhea
  - m. Loss of Taste
  - n. Loss of Smell
  - o. Fatigue

**If answer is YES to any of these questions, you may not be considered for jury duty.**