STATE OF WISCONSIN **SEVENTH JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT**

IN THE MATTER OF
OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR
JACKSON COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

ORDER

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2020, and as amended on April 15, 2020, the Wisconsin Supreme Court suspended, until further order of the court, most in-person proceedings, subject to exceptions for certain matters, if remote technology is not practicable or adequate to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens of Wisconsin.

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ordered each circuit court to submit an operational plan to the chief judge of the applicable judicial administrative district. The operational plan was to include the requirements set forth in the order, and reduce to the greatest extent possible the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19, and promote the health and safety of all those present in the courtrooms and other court-related confined spaces. Supreme Court Orders, *In Re the Matter of the Extension of Orders and Interim rule concerning Continuation of Jury Trials, Suspension of Statutory Deadlines for Non-Criminal Jury Trials, and Remote Hearings during the COVID-19 Pandemic (05/22/20)* and *In Re the matter of the Final Report of the Wisconsin Courts COVID-19 Task Force (05/22/20).*

WHEREAS, on September 14, 2020, the Jackson County Circuit Court submitted an operational plan to resume in-person court proceedings and jury trials pursuant to the Wisconsin Supreme Court's May 22, 2020 order. The plan verifies that the court has communicated with the appropriate stakeholders regarding the protective measures. It also requires face coverings for all individuals present in the courtroom, appropriate social distancing, sanitation/hygiene practices, and appropriate signage.

IT IS ORDERED the operational plan for the Jackson County Circuit Court is approved for the resumption of in-person court proceedings and jury trials.

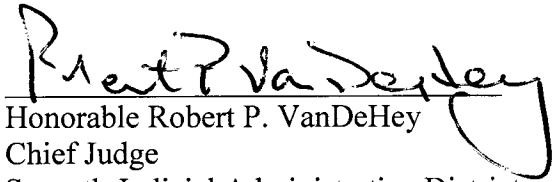
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED the Wisconsin Supreme Court's amended order *In Re the Matter of Remote Hearings During the COVID-19 Pandemic (04/15/20),* ceases to apply to the Jackson County Circuit Court:

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED the Wisconsin Supreme Court's amended order *In Re the Matter of Jury Trials During the COVID-19 Pandemic (03/22/20),* ceases to apply to the Jackson County Circuit Court:

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED the Wisconsin Supreme Court's Interim Rule 20-02 *In Re the Matter of an Interim Rule re Suspension of Deadlines for Non-Criminal Jury Trials Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic,* ceases to apply to the Jackson County Circuit Court:

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED the provisions of this order shall be subject to modification or termination by future orders.

Dated this 14th day of September, 2020



Honorable Robert P. VanDeHey
Chief Judge
Seventh Judicial Administrative District

BY THE COURT:

Honorable Anna L. Becker
Jackson County Circuit Court

Date: September 14, 2020

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT JACKSON COUNTY

JACKSON COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT OPERATIONAL PLAN TO RESUME IN-PERSON COURT APPEARANCES DUE TO COVID-19

Effective **October 1, 2020**, the Circuit Court for Jackson County, Wisconsin, Honorable Anna L. Becker, hereby orders the adoption and implementation of the operational plan set forth herein for the safe resumption of in-person proceedings and jury trials. Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals, the Circuit Court of Jackson County will implement the following protective measures. Said plan dictates how the Circuit Court plans to conduct in-person proceedings and jury trials in a manner that reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and which promotes the health and safety of all persons present in the courtroom, jury rooms, and other court-related spaces.

General

1. Judge Becker has established a stakeholder committee to discuss and consider the recommendations outlined in the Wisconsin COVID-19 Task Force report as well as to prepare a strategy for safely resuming in person court appearances. The following stakeholders have been identified:
    - Judge Anna Becker
    - Clerk of Court Jan Moennig
    - Family Court Commissioner Margaret Rewald
    - Sheriff Duane Waldera
    - Chief Deputy Adam Olson
    - District Attorney Daniel Diehn
    - State Public Defender Supervisor Carly Sebion
    - County Board Chair Ray Ransom
    - Facilities Supervisor Rick Poff
    - Emergency Government Director Kristina Page
    - Public Health Director Ellen Moldenhauer
    - DOC Supervisor Aaron Cernohous
    - Judge JoDeen Lowe, Ho Chunk Nation
    - Attorney Mark Radcliffe, member of local Bar
    - District Court Administrator Patrick Brummond

2. All judges presiding over Jackson County cases will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely in order to ensure the availability of adequate space for social distancing.
3. Before calendaring in-person hearings, any equipment and supplies deemed necessary by the stakeholder committee must be procured and readily available for immediate use; staffing needs identified by the committee must have been met; and staff must have proper training on the new protocols. The stakeholder committee will continue to meet periodically and maintain communication with the Public Health and Emergency Management departments of Jackson County. The committee will adjust this operating plan as necessary considering the availability of necessary PPE, and the changes in the public health conditions in the county, Western Wisconsin and the State of Wisconsin.
4. In-person court proceedings may begin no sooner than **October 1, 2020**, provided that all of the criteria set forth in this plan have been met. The Judge will review staffing, daily information provided by Jackson County Public Health on their facebook page, and facility conditions to determine whether a change in the phase is warranted. Depending on circumstances such as a sudden increase in confirmed cases and/or expansive community transmission, it may be necessary to revert to a previous phase until such time as expanded operations are once again warranted and feasible. The judge reserves the right to change phases and/or modify conditions in each phase and work in periodic consultation with the identified task force.
5. The operating plan may be modified in part or in whole at any time if deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of those appearing in the Jackson County Circuit Court.

Health and Safety Criteria for In-Person Appearances

1. *Face Coverings:* "Face covering" is defined as a covering made of fabric or other material worn to cover the nose and mouth completely which is sufficient to impede the emission of vapor from the wearer. All persons present in courtrooms, jury rooms, and other court related confined spaces for hearings or trials which are not conducted strictly by zoom shall wear face coverings. Persons may not enter the courtroom until face coverings are securely in place. Individuals are encouraged to provide their own face covering provided it complies with this requirement. The court will provide face coverings to those who need them.

    a. The following exceptions to the face covering requirement apply:
        - the presiding court official determines on the record that it is necessary for a witness not to wear a face covering during the witness's testimony in order for the court or the jury to weigh the witness's credibility.
        - Children ages four (4) years old or younger.
        - Any person with a disability that makes it difficult to wear a face covering.
        - Any person consistently interacting with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing where communication cannot be achieved sufficiently by other means.

- Any person with a medical condition, intellectual or developmental disability, mental health condition, or other sensory sensitivity that prevents the person from wearing a face covering.
- Employees within their common office space, provided no other local or state rule requires otherwise.

b. Face shields may be considered adequate face coverings on a case by case basis at the discretion of the presiding court official except when social distancing cannot be honored, provided prior express approval is sought and granted by the presiding court official.

c. Notices regarding the requirement of wearing face coverings will be posted at the entrance of each courtroom, jury room, and court-related confined space. This requirement shall be enforced by the judge(s) of the Circuit Court.

2. *Social Distancing:*

a. All persons using court facilities shall maintain at least six (6) feet between all persons, except persons residing in the same household.

b. The number of persons in the courtroom shall be limited to provide for proper social distancing. Priority will be given to victims and support persons for victims over the general public. If adequate seating space is an issue, the bailiff shall inquire whether a victim is present and desires to be present and then determine others with priority. Individuals in the gallery shall social distance and every other row of benches shall be left empty to accomplish this. The other courtroom or county board room may be used for overflow for cases with large numbers in attendance.

c. Those who are excluded from the hearing due to space constraints and who wish to observe will have access to the proceeding via zoom video. It will be available utilizing their personal device or may be live-streamed live to another courtroom if prior arrangements are requested and it is feasible. The zoom information is readily available from the Clerk of Court Office or the Judicial Assistant or at www.wicourts.gov under the case number.

d. Attorneys are not required to socially distance from their clients as it may be necessary for them to consult privately during hearings. Face coverings and hand sanitizer are available on the counsel tables and are intended to reduce safety concerns in those situations.

e. Seating shall be arranged or marked to encourage spacing, including seating at counsel tables, waiting areas, and work spaces.

f. If the county board room is utilized for court proceedings, only two persons will be permitted in the elevator at one time unless all persons reside in the same household.

g. Only one person at a time should use the public restrooms near the courtrooms.

h. Depending on the hearing type, and the number of attendees, the court may allow the witness to testify from counsel table if the witness is a litigant and the court deems it appropriate.

i. Marks delineating appropriate social distancing for waiting in the entry queue will be placed on the floor.

j. Plexiglass partitions will be utilized around the witness stand.

k. Face shields will be required and provided for any testifying witness who is requested to remove his or her face covering in order to allow the trier of fact to view full facial expressions for purposes of judging credibility.
l. For parties wishing to appear by zoom video who do not have the capability of doing so with their own devices, arrangements can be made upon request by the party to provide them access to zoom video via the other courtroom or via the county boardroom provided they are available and not otherwise in use.

3. *Health/hygiene precautions:*

a. Hand sanitizer is available inside the entrance to the building, in jury rooms, on staff desks in the courtroom, and on counsel tables in the courtrooms.
b. Disinfectant wipes/spray are provided at each counsel table to enable parties to sanitize their area before and/or after each appearance.
c. The swinging gates between the gallery and well in each courtroom shall be temporarily removed or left open;
d. Employees shall sanitize shared work areas before and after their usage;
e. Wooden counsel tables shall have plexiglass placed over the surface to enable frequent sanitizing to occur without damage to the desks;
f. Telephones on counsel tables shall be temporarily removed unless deemed necessary for a particular hearing;
g. All exhibits that parties anticipate using at a hearing must be electronically filed at least 12 hours in advance of the scheduled hearing to avoid the need to physcially handle them; exhibits will be referred to by CCAP document number in the hearing; no paper will be accepted for filing at hearings.
h. For all in person hearings, litigants wishing to introduce exhibits will be required to bring their own devices to access the document or alternatively give 48 hours advance notice to the court that they will need assistance in this regard.
i. If appearing remotely for a hearing involving exhibits, it is required that the litigants appear using zoom video access in order to properly view an exhibit referred to by the court or the other party.

4. *Signage:* Signs outlining appropriate hygiene, social distancing, or public safety are posted outside the courtroom. Notices regarding the availability of hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes or spray will be posted at the entrance of each courtroom, jury room, and court-related confined space.

Screening

1. Court attendees will be asked screening questions deemed appropriate by the public health department and may have their temperatures taken.
2. Court attendees shall bring only items essential for their hearing onto the premises in order to minimize the need for security staff to touch personal items and conduct other searches.

3. Individuals who answer affirmatively to the screening questions or who show a temperature of 100.3 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will be refused admittance to the courtroom. The screener will notify the court immediately if admittance has been denied. The case will be rescheduled accordingly.
4. Individuals appearing in person who are in custody (i.e., jail inmates, prison inmates, those in custody of a mental institution or treatment facility, etc...) should be screened prior to transport to the courthouse. If pre-screening is not conducted at the facility prior to departure, it shall be conducted outside of the courtroom prior to being allowed admission.
5. If a litigant or attorney is experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19, they shall call the Judicial Assistant or Clerk of Court's Office **before** entering the courthouse and the matter will be rescheduled or conducted remotely.
6. Security bailiffs shall be provided appropriate PPE as necessary by the Jackson County Sheriffs Department.
7. Employees should immediately notify their supervisor and the Judge if they are actively exhibiting symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19 or if they have had in person contact with any person who has tested positive for COVID-19; In either of these situations, employees shall not enter the courtroom.

Cleaning

1. The Facilities staff shall clean common areas of the courthouse entryway nearest the elevator and the secure area (immediately outside the courtroom beyond the security checkpoint) in the courthouse at least once per day.
2. The Facilities staff will ensure that the courtroom is cleaned at least twice per day when person hearings occur regularly: once prior to commencing the first court appearance of the day, and then at least one time mid- day (ie. during lunch recess).
3. The Facilities staff will be provided with an adequate supply of cleaning supplies shown to be effective on the coronavirus.
4. The Facilities staff will be trained regarding the proper cleaning techniques and will be provided the appropriate PPE to use while cleaning.
5. Cleaning wipes or sanitizing spray and hand sanitizer at the counsel tables will be supplied by the Facilities Department on a self-serve basis for litigants to clean the tables and chairs they use in the courtroom both before and after their appearance.
6. Courtroom staff will be provided with extra hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes/spray to keep in the courtroom in the event that the supplies on the counsel tables run out during the scheduled in person court hearings. This will ensure that at no time are these hygiene precautions unavailable to attendees.
7. The Facilities Department shall develop a system to be used by court personnel to request additional supplies for the courtroom hygiene needs to ensure that requests are promptly addressed within 24 hours.
8. If at any time it becomes a concern that a person who might have been infected with COVID-19 has entered the court facilities, no persons shall enter the courtroom until the Facilities Department is able to conduct a deep cleaning.

9. The clerk will wipe down any hand held microphones as they are returned to her using sanitizing wipes.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over the age of 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart problems, chronic lung disease, diabetes, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised are considered to be vulnerable populations.
2. Notices shall contain information notifying vulnerable populations of the ability to contact the court to identify themselves as vulnerable and to receive appropriate accommodations.
3. Accommodations shall be made on a case by case basis and may include scheduling to a date/time when there are no other cases scheduled to minimize the chance of exposure, allowing for a remote Zoom court appearance, or re-calendaring the matter to a later date when the prevalence of COVID-19 has diminished.

Scheduling

1. Unless a party requests an in person appearance, the hearing will be scheduled as a remote zoom appearance. If a zoom appearance is scheduled, parties are strongly encouraged to participate by zoom video if possible. If a party does not have the ability to support a video appearance, zoom audio will be allowed.
2. If any party objects to a hearing being held remotely, a written request must be filed to convert it to an in person hearing. Such request must be filed at least **THREE (3)** full business days before the hearing, specify a basis, and report on whether the other party objects. Conversely, a party may request that an in person hearing be conducted remotely by following the same procedures.
3. Prioritizing of In-Person Hearings: Until further order of the Circuit Court, at the discretion of the presiding court official, hearings will be conducted by other than in-person means for those matters where the quality of the hearing is not materially impacted by remote appearance and required waivers and consents are given.
4. Based on the Task Force guidance, and subject to the discretion of the presiding judicial officer in an individual case after consultation with the parties, the following hearing types will ordinarily be conducted in the following fashion until further order:

HEARING TYPE	APPEARANCE TYPE
Intake for child support, small claims, criminal, & traffic/ordinance violations	*zoom*
Preliminary Hearings	*In person or zoom video with express agreement by the parties*
Criminal evidentiary hearings	*In person or zoom with express agreement by the parties*
Small Claims/traffic court trials	*zoom or in person depending on the complexity of the issues*

Family Evidentiary hearings & trials	*zoom video or in person depending on the complexity of the issues*
Criminal Status Conferences	*zoom*
Criminal Pleas/ Sentencings	*In person or zoom video upon express agreement of the parties*
Jury Trials	*In person only*
Probate Hearings	*zoom*
Juvenile Citations/truancy matters	*zoom*
Delinquency, ChIPS	*zoom or in person depending on the complexity of the issues and considering the requests of the parties*
ChIPS Jury Trials	*In person*
Adoptions	*zoom*
Mental Commitments	*zoom (final hearing may be in person upon request of the parties and court approval)*
Guardianship/protective placement	*zoom (final hearing may be in person upon request of the parties and court approval)*
Treatment court	*in person with social distancing; zoom upon prior approval of court official*
Family Court Commissioner hearings	*Zoom or in person depending on the complexity of the issues*
Injunction Hearings	*Zoom video*
Other Civil Hearings	*Zoom*

Jury Trials

The Jackson County Department of Public Health is able to make periodic recommendations as to the advisibility of conducting large gatherings based upon the COVID-19 activity level (based upon burden, trajectory and activity levels among other objective criteria). If the recommendation by Jackson County Public Health allows for gatherings of less than 50 people, but more than 10 people, a six (6) person Jury Trial may be conducted provided all other criteria are met; no 12 person jury trials may be conducted. If the recommendation by Jackson County Public Health allows for groups larger than 50, a six (6) or twelve (12) person jury trial may be conducted provided all other criteria are met. The Jackson County Circuit Court adopts the following as Health and Safety Criteria for Jury Trials:

1. Notice will be sent with each juror summons outlining the safety procedures and screening questions;
2. A press release will be prepared and sent to local media; The release will describe the plan and it will be posted on the Jackson County website;

3. Both courtrooms, the County Board room, and (if necessary) the Sheriff's Department Training Center, will be utilized to the extent necessary in order allow for proper social distancing during jury selection and deliberations;
4. The public will have access to open court trials via zoom video;
5. Individual notepads and pencils/pens will be provided to each juror for personal, non-shared use during the trial;
6. No communal food or drink will be provided or available on site;
7. Lunches will be provided by the court and shall be delivered in individual containers; Bottled water and canned soda will be provided.
8. A six person jury will be seated in the jury box using every other seat. A twelve person jury trial will require the gallery to be converted to the jury box, with chairs being placed socially distanced appropriately.
9. If there are two counsel tables needed for a six person jury trial, they will remain in approximately the same location but be distanced apart from each other to the maximum extent. If two are needed for a twelve person jury trial, the tables will be placed perpendicularly (facing each other) to enable counsel to see the witnesses and the jury, and to avoid juror glimpses of counsel table information. If there are more than two parties involved, the courtroom will be reconfigured based upon an analysis on a case by case basis to ensure proper social distancing.
10. After the jury has been empaneled, efforts will be made to accommodate social distancing, but yet ensure that each juror has adequate sight lines to the witness stand and can see and hear all proceedings.

Summoning 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 prospective juror.
2. The Clerk of Court and the Judge are utilizing liberal deferral and excusal of jurors.
3. The following protective measures, including check-in that minimizes physical contact with documents, posting notice regarding hygiene and distancing practices, are in place for jurorS who report to court. Appropriate personnel will meet jurors arriving for service to conduct screening measures deemed appropriate by public health. If the screening indicates that a juror may be COVID-19 positive or may have recently been exposed to COVID-19, the juror will be refused admittance to the courthouse and service will be deferred.

Juror Attendance and Safe Participation

1. The following personal protective equipment will be available to jurors if they have not brought their own: masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes.
2. Upon request, the court will defer the service of any prospective jurors who are over the age of 65 or who express health concerns relating to jury service.
3. Social distancing of jurors will be enforced by implementation of the following: limiting capacity in the courtroom, marking off spaces 6' apart within the courtroom and jury

box, reconfiguring placement of counsel tables, court reporter, witness stand, and/or bench, and using a secondary courtroom for additional capacity.

4. The following strategies will be used to reduce the number of people required to report for jury selection: Utilizing preselection questionnaires, conduct voir dire in sessions based on the capacity of the courtroom that will allow appropriate social distancing, utilizing in-person and virtual voir dire simultaneously, broadcasting jury selection via Zoom Video, limiting or eliminating public spectators in the courtroom, and utilizing 6 person juries if the parties so stipulate.
5. Jury selection should be conducted on a day prior to actual commencement of the trial to ensure all surfaces are properly cleaned and sanitized and juror seating is properly arranged for social distancing given the number of jurors selected.
6. Accommodations include: use of technology and video monitors to increase sight lines and to eliminate the handling of exhibits in person, plexiglass surrounding the witness stand.
7. Social distancing consideration during trial breaks and deliberations include reconfiguration of the jury room (6 person juries), or using both courtrooms (12 person juries. For large jury trials, one courtroom will serve as the jury room to allow the jurors to spread out for meals, breaks and deliberations.
8. Due to social distancing requirements, capacity in the gallery is very limited (for small jury trials) or nonexistent (for large jury trials). Therefore, if members of the public cannot be accommodated due to the number attending, proceedings will be available for public viewing via zoom video. The information will be posted outside the courtroom and available through the Clerk of Court's Office or the Judicial Assistant.
9. The court will prioritize jury trials and as usual will take into consideration the nature of the case, the extent to which the cases involve liberty interests, cases with time limitations, victims' rights and input, length expected to try the case, and the length of time the case has been pending.
10. Once prospective jurors have been screened, they shall not be permitted to leave the courthouse until they are formally excused from jury service or until the proceedings have concluded for the day.

Starting Date for Resumption of Jury Trials

1. The presiding judge may resume conducting in person 6 person jury trials provided the following is in place, but not earlier than October 15, 2020:
    a. Plexiglass is in place around the witness stand.
    b. The positioning of the court reporter and witness stand will be exchanged.
    c. There is an ample supply of PPE available for all jurors/attendees and face shields are available for witnesses.
    d. There are sufficient facilities staff members available to thoroughly clean court facilities at appropriate times.
    e. The Clerk of Court has sufficient time to prepare the summonses and letters.
    f. If more than two counsel tables will be necessary, that the benches in Branch I have been removed and placed in secure storage in order to accommodate social distancing between parties' tables.

g. Both circuit courtrooms are available and sufficiently arranged for social distancing at selection phase.
h. With express approval and permission of all parties, the court will permit a stipulation to a 6 person jury trial pursuant to the provisions of Section 756.06 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

2. The presiding judge may resume conducting in person 12 person jury trials provided the following is in place, but not earlier than December 1, 2020:
   a. All of the requirements for 6 person Jury trials have been met.
   b. There are sufficient staff available to coordinate at least 3 locations of jurors in the pool that need to be periodically moved to the main courtroom as some are excused.
   c. The gallery benches have been removed and placed in secure storage in order to utilize the gallery space as the jury box.
   d. There are sufficient facilities staff members available to arrange socially distanced seating utilizing chairs from the County Board Room in the gallery area (replacing the benches) for the seating of the jury.
   e. There are sufficient facilities staff members available to arrange socially distant seating in the Branch II courtroom and the county board room to allow for jury selection.
   f. The technology in the County Board room has been upgraded to allow for live streaming so that it can be used during jury selection.

Other

This operational plan is effective October 1, 2020, and shall remain in effect pending the court approving an amended operational plan or the issuance of a Wisconsin Supreme Court Order that modifies or extinguishes the indefinite duration of the Order it issued on May 22, 2020.

Jackson County

COVID-19 Visitor Screening

Date:	Name:	Department Visited/Reason:
Time:	Phone #:	

Jackson County is committed to the health and safety of all employees and visitors. We are screening all those who enter for symptoms of COVID-19.

Once a visitor is allowed entry, movement within the facility will be limited to designated areas.

- Clean your hands often. Hand sanitizer is available throughout the facility.
- If you are ill or develop any of the signs or symptoms below during your visit, notify the applicable meeting organizer immediately.
- If you develop any symptoms listed below following your visit please contact your healthcare provider for COVID-19 testing.

COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms	
1. Are you experiencing any symptoms in any ONE of these bulleted areas? • Cough • New loss of taste or loss of smell • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Yes or No
2. Are you experiencing any symptoms in any TWO or more of these bulleted areas? • Diarrhea/nausea/vomiting • Fever over 100.4/chills • Congestion/runny nose • Headache/body aches • Sore throat • Extreme fatigue	Yes or No
3. Have you had contact with a person known to have tested positive or that is being tested for COVID-19?	Yes or No

A YES answer to any of the questions above would indicate that the visitor may be demonstrating signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and will not be allowed entry into the building. Alternate methods of service delivery may be made available to the degree possible.

Date:	Time:	Screener:
Notes:		

Form issued: 9/3/2020

JACKSON COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

307 Main Street
Black River Falls, Wisconsin 54615
Telephone: 715-284-0213 Fax: 715-284-0277

ANNA L. BECKER, CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

CHERYL OLSON
Judicial Assistant **Ext. 213**

MIRANDA SEITZ
Official Court Reporter **Ext. 211**

HEATHER ZAK
Register in Probate **Ext. 286**

ALICIA ARENZ
Juvenile Court Clerk/
Depty. RIP **Ext. 288**

[DATE]
To All Prospective Jurors Summoned to Appear
For Jury Selection at the Jackson County Circuit
Court in Black River Falls, Wisconsin on the
____ day of _____, 202___

RE: Your upcoming Jury Service in the Era of COVID-19

Dear Prospective Jurors:

This letter is attached to a Summons directing you to appear for Jury Duty at _____a.m. on the _____ day of _____, 202___ , at the Jackson County Courthouse. The Courthouse is located at 307 Main Street in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. We want you to know that

Jackson County Cares About Juror Safety!

In light of COVID-19 pandemic, Jackson County wants to assure each and every juror that every reasonable precaution will be taken to enhance the health and safety of the jury, the parties, the attorneys, and the court staff during jury selection and the trial to follow.

Safety measures have been implemented to keep you safe during your jury service. Please be aware of the following:

- Face coverings are required to be worn by all individuals entering the Courtrooms and the secure area in the Courthouse. Please bring your own face covering with you to wear. If you do not have one, Jackson County will provide you with one upon your arrival. Please enter the building with your mask on.
- Upon arrival, you will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19. Social distancing will be enforced. Any prospective juror that does not meet screening criteria for COVID-19 will be refused admittance to the courthouse and their service will be deferred.
- Court facilities and the restrooms within are regularly disinfected.

- Hand sanitizer will be provided however you may bring your own if you wish.
- Sanitizing wipes will be available if you wish to sanitize the area around you periodically.
- Smartphones, ipads, or similar electronic devices should be left outside the courthouse. You may certainly leave them in your vehicle rather than at home, if you choose, but do not bring them into the courthouse.
- We have modified our usual procedures for jury selection so that social distancing is enforced. Jurors will be spaced apart throughout the courtroom. In the case of 12 person juries, a separate courtroom will be used for breaks or deliberations to ensure that jurors are not confined in a small enclosed space.
- You may not bring beverages other than bottled water into the courtroom. A coffee pot will not be available. Bottled water and canned soda will be provided free of charge by the county during breaks.
- Writing instruments and tablets will be provided by the county for your use during the trial and will not be shared with other jurors.
- Jurors will not "sign in" with a shared writing instrument. The clerk will note those in attendance.
- Individual lunches will be provided during the trial to jurors who are selected to serve, in order to minimize jurors' interactions at local dining establishments. If you have dietary concerns or restrictions, please notify the Clerk of Court as soon as possible if you will be reporting for juror duty.
- If you are summoned to serve and have any concerns about your own health and capacity to serve please call the Clerk of Court IMMEDIATELY at (715) 284-_____. If you are feeling ill on the day you are required to appear, please call the Clerk at this number BEFORE coming to the courthouse.
- Please sign up for text or email notifications by calling the clerk at the above number.
- There may be a jury questionnaire included in your summons packet. This is a way to limit the volume of jurors entering the facility for selection so it is very important that you complete it and return it as soon as possible to the clerk of court.

If you answer "yes" to any of the following, you should contact the Clerk of Court:

1. Have you been diagnosed by a licensed physician or have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 30 days?
2. Are you actively caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19?
3. Are you now in self-quarantine status and that status will continue at the time you are to report for jury duty?
4. Are you actively suffering any symptom commonly associated with COVID-19?
5. Have you been recently tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting testing results?

In any of these situations, you should immediately contact the Jackson County Clerk of Court at 715-284-_____.

Please be aware that the right to trial by jury is one of the cornerstones of our democracy, and jury trials necessarily involve sacrifice from those citizens called upon to serve. This has always

been true, but it is especially true during these unique and trying times. It is often said that jury service is the second highest form of public service that any American can perform, second only to service in the Armed Forces. The right to trial by jury has been enshrined within the Seventh Amendment to our U.S. Constitution since 1791, and it was one of the stated principles in the Declaration of Independence which fueled our struggle to become an independent nation. Only those with extreme hardships should seek to be excused based upon pre-existing obligations.

It is vital that you appear and present yourself for jury service on the _____ day of _____, 202___; however, the Court wants you to know that we are mindful of these challenging times and we will take every reasonable precaution to maintain your health as well as that of the parties, attorneys, and Court staff during this upcoming trial.

I hope this personal letter is helpful and informative. We look forward to seeing you.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna L. Becker
Jackson County Circuit Court

If you have any other questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call the Clerk of Court at (715) 284-_____.