

DISTRICT COURT  
SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
STATE OF IDAHO



DANE H. WATKINS, JR.  
DISTRICT JUDGE  
(208) 529-1350 Ext. 1326  
dwatkins@co.bonneville.id.us

RESIDENT CHAMBERS  
605 NORTH CAPITAL AVENUE  
IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO 83402

March 30, 2020

Members of the Seventh Judicial District Bar,

In the midst of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, our lives, both personally and professionally, have been significantly impacted. Thank you for your patience and understanding over the last several days if you have interacted with our courts, judges and staff. I empathize with any frustration you have experienced responding to changing circumstances.

On March 26, 2020, the Idaho Supreme Court issued its In Re: Emergency Reduction in Court Services and Limitation of Access to Court Facilities Order. The Supreme Court issued this order in response to the coronavirus emergency declared by Governor Brad Little on March 25, 2020.

Effective upon the issuance, the Supreme Court has limited court operations and defined the minimum number of operating personnel for each court facility. Consistent in protecting the health and safety of state, district and county employees, elected officials, and the general public, the Seventh Judicial District has implemented measures prescribed by the Order.

Our District's objective is to meet expectations under the Supreme Court's Order and function in a manner so as to reduce the number of individuals in the courtrooms and in the common areas throughout the courthouses.

Last Friday, I joined all of the judges across the district to discuss the Supreme Court Order. It was helpful to hear a report on how things are functioning in their respective counties. As a result of the discussion and subsequent direction from the Supreme Court, the following hearings are permitted under the term of the Supreme Court Order:

- In-custody arraignments
- Rider Review hearings if held telephonically.
- In-custody preliminary hearings
- Civil Protection Order hearings
- Child Protection proceedings
- Emergency Guardianship proceedings

- Termination of Parental Rights hearings
- Adoptions
- Juvenile Detention hearings
- Civil Mental Commitment proceedings
- Civil Proceedings addressed in IRCP 65, IRFLP 507 & 508
- Eviction actions where the basis for eviction is that the unlawful delivery, production or use of a controlled substance is taking place on the premises.

If a judge in a case determines that an emergency exists, additional hearings can be held under the order as written. Civil and criminal counsel are encouraged to confer on matters that can be submitted to the court for decision based upon the existing record, stipulated facts or evidence, affidavits and briefing.

Thank you for serving our district and your clients during this challenging time. Your cooperation will help minimize the risk for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dane Watkins, Jr." The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dane" being particularly prominent.

Dane Watkins, Jr.  
Administrative Judges Seventh Judicial District.