

3/31/2020

JULIA C. DUDLEY, CLERK
BY: s/ A. Beeson
DEPUTY CLERK

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

IN THE MATTER OF:

**COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE EXIGENT
CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY THE OUTBREAK
OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19):
TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF CLERK'S OFFICE
PUBLIC COUNTERS**

Standing Order No. 2020-9

The United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia is closely monitoring the pandemic of the coronavirus known as COVID-19 as well as the guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The CDC has advised precautionary measures, emphasized the importance of containing the outbreak, and noted that the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. In light of the developing guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") and various other levels and branches of government, as well as the rapidly accelerating number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and community spread within this District and the United States, and after careful consultation with appropriate stakeholders, **this Court has determined that it is appropriate to further limit unnecessary person-to-person interactions between the public and Clerk's Office employees of both the District Court and Bankruptcy Court.**

Accordingly, the following procedures will be instituted:

1. In order to reduce person-to-person contact for individuals submitting in-person filings at our courthouses, the Court has installed drop-boxes in the following federal courthouses in the Western District: Abingdon; Charlottesville; Danville; Harrisonburg; Lynchburg; and Roanoke. The drop-boxes allow litigants to date stamp their filings and securely submit them without entering the Clerk's Office. Drop-

boxes are located inside the lobby area of each courthouse. Visitors will pass through the security screening area to access the drop-boxes. Members of the public will retain access to the drop-boxes to deposit filings during business hours. Should a visitor to the courthouse be unable to use the drop boxes due to the visitor restrictions, they are instructed to contact the appropriate court division using the contact information provided in the posted Public Notices;

2. Deputy clerks will retrieve the filings from the drop-boxes each business day at 9:00 a.m. Pleadings will be processed thereafter in accordance with the court's filing and docketing procedures;
3. Payment of filing fees must be made by personal check, certified check, money order or by utilizing Pay.gov. Payment of criminal fees and penalties must be made by personal check, certified check, or money order or may be made via credit/debit card by calling the Clerk's Office directly during the hours of 8:30am-4:30pm. Payments by check or money order will be accepted by mail or the courthouse drop-box. Cash payments will NOT be accepted during this period of exigent circumstances; and
4. All counsel capable of submitting filings via the CM/ECF electronic filing system should continue to file electronically to avoid unnecessary courthouse visits. Clerk's Office staff will continue working, in our courthouses and remotely, to process electronic and drop-box filings and to answer calls made from inside and outside our courthouses. Filings will continue to be processed in civil and criminal cases via the CM/ECF electronic system and by mail.

The public counters of the Clerk's Office in this District will remain closed to the public effective this day until further order of this Court.

It is so **ORDERED**.

For the Court:

Enter this 30th day of March 2020.

**Michael F.
Urbanski**

Digitally signed by Michael F. Urbanski
DN: cn=Michael F. Urbanski, o=Western District
of Virginia, ou=United States District Court,
email=mikeu@vawd.uscourts.gov, c=US
Date: 2020.03.30 16:22:38 -04'00'

Michael F. Urbanski
Chief United States District Judge