



217-253-3511
217-253-2913

OFFICE OF THE **DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF**

920 S. Washington Street • P.O. Box 438 • Tuscola, Illinois 61953

SHERIFF JOSHUA BLACKWELL
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CHIEF DEPUTY STEVE POLLUM
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UPDATED MARCH 16, 2020 1:35 P.M.

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

RE: COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

Due to the global coronavirus pandemic, the Douglas County Court will reduce operations in order to minimize personal contact and deter the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, effective March 17, 2020. The following procedures and rules are consistent with Supreme Court recommendations and shall remain in effect through March 31, 2020, unless extended by the further order of the court.

The following Douglas County cases and court proceedings are postponed from March 17 to March 31 unless extended further by the court:

- Traffic, conservation, and ordinance violation cases (TR, DT, DV, OV)
- Criminal misdemeanor cases (CM) – except for those defendants in custody
- Family Court (F, D)
- Juvenile cases (with the exceptions set forth below)

The attorney of record or unrepresented party in each case will receive a notice in the mail rescheduling their case. It is the responsibility of the litigant to ensure your current address is on file with the clerk. Upon rescheduling, the public access website (www.judici.com) will be updated with the new court dates. Currently-scheduled status dates may be converted to phone conference upon request.

Emergency matters may be scheduled on a case-by-case basis. Individuals shall contact the Circuit Clerk of Douglas County for the purposes of scheduling emergency matters.

The following cases and court proceedings will be held as scheduled, with appearances expected for all litigants:

- Criminal felony cases (CF)
- Civil cases (L, LM)
- Probate (P)
- Small claims and mortgage foreclosures (SC, CH)



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- Juvenile hearings (JA, JD) – temporary detention hearings, shelter care hearings, trials, adjudicatory hearings
- Domestic violence proceedings for order of protection, stalking/no-contact orders, or civil no-contact orders (OP)
- Emergency hearings on family matters (D, F) as scheduled by the court
- Other cases on a case-by-case basis in discretion of the court with consent of the parties

Marriage Ceremonies – the court will continue to perform marriage ceremonies

Individuals should not enter the courthouse if they:

- Have been in any of the following countries within the last 21 days: China, South Korea, Italy, Japan, or Iran; or
- Reside with or had close contact with anyone who has been in one of the above countries within the last 21 days; or
- Have been directed by a medical provider to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor at home for the coronavirus;
- Have been diagnosed with, or have had close contact with anyone diagnosed with, COVID-19; or
- Have flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, or shortness of breath

If you are an attorney or litigant and you are unable to appear in the court as required because of the above restrictions, please contact the courthouse. The court should make reasonable accommodations and reschedule appearances and hearings as needed. Continuances will be liberally granted.

Cleaning staff will continue to disinfect touch surfaces and hand sanitizer is provided throughout the building, including the courtroom. The court requests litigants not bring family or friend to court appearances in any case unless their appearance is required by the case. It is our aim to preserve access to justice while proceeding in a manner consistent with public health and safety in line with policy directives from federal, state, and local public health advisories. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Honorable Richard Broch

Honorable Kate Watson

Honorable Joshua Blackwell

Presiding Judge

State's Attorney

Sheriff