

FILED



10:55 am, 4/6/20

Margaret Botkins
Clerk of Court

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING**

GENERAL ORDER:

GRANTING AUTHORIZATION FOR
PUBLIC ACCESS TO OPEN COURT
PROCEEDINGS

GENERAL ORDER NO. 20-04

**GENERAL ORDER AUTHORIZING PUBLIC ACCESS
TO OPEN COURT PROCEEDINGS**

This matter comes before the Court *sua sponte* regarding providing the public access to open Court proceedings in civil and criminal matters currently being conducted via videoconference and teleconference due to the public health and safety risks associated with the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 13, 2020, President Trump issued a declaration of a National Emergency which was followed by a state of emergency being declared by Wyoming's Governor Gordon on the same day. The World Health Organization has declared this outbreak a global pandemic. At this time it is unclear how long the National Emergency and/or state of emergency will remain. As a result of the risks created to the health and safety of parties, counsel, court personnel and the general public, this Court has imposed restrictions on the entry into the Courthouses in this district. (See General Order 20-1). In addition, due to the serious risk to the public, inmates and detention center populations and staff, this Court is conducting criminal hearings and proceedings via video conference, and where video conferencing is not reasonably available it is conducting these proceedings via telephone conferencing. (See General Order No. 20-03). As a result, access to these proceedings by the public and press is limited. To minimize this limitation, on behalf of the Judicial Conference of the United States

Courts, the Executive Committee has approved a TEMPORARY exception to Judicial Conference Policy that prohibits the broadcasting of proceedings in Federal Courts. (See JCUS-SEP 94, *Guide to Judicial Policy*, Vol. 10, Ch. 4).

Pursuant to this temporary exception, Federal District Courts of Wyoming may, and this Court hereby does, authorize use of teleconference technology¹ to provide the public and media audio access to public civil hearings and public criminal court proceedings (as authorized under the CARES Act, P.L. 116-136, 134 Stat. 281) while public access to federal courthouses located in Wyoming is restricted due to health and safety concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. This authorization shall expire upon the earlier of this Court's revocation of this General Order or a finding by the United States Judicial Conference that the emergency conditions with respect to COVID-19 are no longer materially affecting the functioning of the federal courts generally or a particular district. To obtain audio access to proceedings in the District of Wyoming, interested individuals can locate the respective calendars for the Judges of this District on its public website: <http://media.wyd.uscourts.gov/htmlpages/calendars/judgecals.html> and then click on the AT&T conference call number link for that particular Judge, which is located on the far right column. Please note a different AT&T conference call link is provided for each judge. Conference call access will be provided approximately five minutes before the proceeding or hearing begins and the public's line will immediately be muted. Due to limits on internet speeds and conference call lines, public access may be restricted or denied in order to allow

¹ This authorization is limited to access through video or teleconference means directly to the court and listener and does not authorize the more traditional forms of "broadcasting" such as livestreaming the court hearings on the internet or some other unrestricted broadcast.

participation by essential parties and counsel.

Except for Official Court Reporters and Court personnel, all other listeners, public or otherwise, **shall NOT record the audio or video of these proceedings or rebroadcast them** and the Court may utilize monitoring technology to verify listeners are not making unauthorized recordings or otherwise violating these restrictions. Violations of these prohibitions may result in sanctions, including removal from any actual or virtual presence at proceedings, restricted or barred access to future hearings or proceedings, or any other sanctions, including contempt of court, the Court finds necessary and proper under the Constitution and laws of the United States. Therefore, it is hereby

ORDERED that the District and Magistrate Judges of the District of Wyoming are hereby authorized to use teleconference technology to provide the public and media access to public civil hearings and public criminal court proceedings (as authorized under the CARES Act, P.L. 116-136, 134 Stat. 281) while public access to federal courthouses located in Wyoming is restricted, due to health and safety concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, subject to the restrictions on broadcasting or recording as set forth above. It is

FURTHER ORDERED that this authorization shall expire upon the earlier of this Court's revocation of this General Order or a finding by the United States Judicial Conference that the emergency conditions with respect to COVID-19 are no longer materially affecting the functioning of the federal courts generally or a particular district.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 6th day of April 2020.


SCOTT W. SKAVDAHL
CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE