

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF WYOMING

Margaret Botkins
Clerk of Court



Jon Bastian
Chief Deputy Clerk

May 20, 2020

UPDATED NOTICE REGARDING DISTRICT COURT CLERK'S OFFICE CHANGE IN OPERATIONS DUE TO COVID-19

In response to public health concerns associated with the COVID-19 outbreak, and to follow up to previous notices dated March 16 and 30, 2020, this notice offers policies, procedures and expectations regarding reopening for in-person hearings and other business within the Federal Courthouses throughout the District of Wyoming.

THE DISTRICT COURT WILL RESUME IN PERSON HEARINGS ON MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020.

- The District Court Clerk's Offices are open to the public, subject to limitations aimed at maintaining the public health.
- Public hours at the Casper and Cheyenne locations are 8:00 am – 12:00 noon and 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. Full service is offered with limited staff.
- Telephone calls will continue to be answered in all locations from 8:00 am – 12:00 noon and 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.
- Filings will continue to be processed in civil and criminal cases via the CM-ECF electronic case filing system, by mail and in person.
- The Clerk's Office will continue to offer the ability to receive new civil actions via email. We have established a general email box (wydnewcase@wyd.uscourts.gov) for parties to submit initiating documents. The Clerk's Office will open the new case and enter it into CM/ECF.
- Drop boxes will remain in place in the lobby of the J.C. O'Mahoney Federal Center in Cheyenne and the Ewing T. Kerr Courthouse in Casper. The drop box will be checked throughout each business day until 4:00 p.m. Documents deposited prior to 4:00 p.m. will be considered filed same day; documents deposited after 4:00 p.m. will be considered filed the next business day.
COMING SOON! – Self Service filing at the drop boxes. More information to follow.
- Payments can be accepted by check or money order by mail, by using the drop boxes or in person during public hours. Payments by credit card will be accepted during public hours only.
- Filing fees for civil cases, appeals, pro hac vice, and miscellaneous cases can now be paid via Pay.gov.

MASKS

- Masks are required to be worn by counsel, parties, witnesses, and members of the public upon entering a Federal Courthouse to attend court hearings or to conduct business with the Court or Clerk's Office.
- Counsel are required to wear masks in the courtrooms when unable to maintain social distance.
- Counsel are required to wear masks when speaking from the podium unless maintaining social distance.
- Counsel, parties, witnesses and members of the public are required to wear masks in the courtroom gallery and in the well of the Court until they are able to maintain social distance or unless otherwise instructed.
- Jurors are required to wear masks during voir dire when they may have to speak, when they are unable to socially distance or unless otherwise instructed.
- Criminal defendants are required to wear masks while in the courtroom.
- Court Security Officers are required to wear masks at initial entry stations when interacting with the public given the inability to socially distance, in the courtrooms and in public hallways when unable to maintain social distance.

COURTROOM DECORUM

- Counsel will be allowed to remain at counsel table in order to maintain social distance.
- Counsel will need to maintain social distance when addressing the Court at the podiums or otherwise wear a mask.
- The number of chairs at counsel tables have been reduced to 4 chairs per table. Any overflow should be managed with court personnel, and in compliance with social distancing guidelines.
- Small individual bottles of water will be provided at counsel table and witness stands.
- Side Bars will be managed by the presiding judge. Masks are required at side bar or side bar conferences may be delayed in order to maintain social distancing.
- Witness Rooms- counsel is required to minimize the number of witnesses waiting in witness rooms in order to maintain social distance. Counsel is required to monitor and control their witnesses.
- Gallery seating in each courtroom and corridor seating have been marked in 6' sections. "Please Sit Here" signs have been placed to comply with social distancing guidelines.

JURY TRIALS

- In order to prescreen potential jurors regarding Covid-19, jury panels will be pulled 1 week prior to the first day of trial. Upon completion of screening, the finalized list of jurors will be provided to counsel.

- Due to limited capacity in courtrooms, most jurors will be placed in the gallery of the courtroom for jury selection. However, if more jurors are needed, they will be placed in another location within the courthouse with audio feed so they can listen to the questions and be prepared to respond if called into the courtroom.
- Jury Selection – during voir dire, court personnel will be available to manage the microphones for jurors to contain the spread of germs. The microphones will be disinfected after each use.
- Petit Jury Rooms may not be large enough to maintain social distance for jurors. In that event, larger rooms within close proximity to the courtroom will be utilized to ensure compliance with social distancing guidelines.

CHAMBERS

- Counsel, Court Personnel, US Probation, US Marshal, US Attorney, and Court Security Officers are required to wear masks in Chambers and Conference Rooms, unless otherwise instructed by the presiding judge.

CLEANING GUIDELINES

- GSA has adopted the cleaning guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is implementing these guidelines. These standards include the routine cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces in common and high traffic areas. These high-touch surfaces include, but are not limited to: handrails, door knobs, key card readers, light switches, countertops, table tops, water faucets and handles, elevator buttons, sinks, toilets and control handles, restroom stall handles, toilet paper and other paper dispensers, door handles and push plates, and drinking fountain controls in common and high traffic areas.
- Hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes are placed throughout the courtrooms, witness rooms, Clerk's Offices, Chambers and Jury Rooms.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- If you have questions, please contact the Clerk's Office for assistance:
Casper: 307-232-2620 or Cheyenne: 307-433-2120.