

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
DISTRICT OF MAINE**

**COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE EXIGENT
CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY COVID-19**

GENERAL ORDER

This order is issued in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the “CDC”) and other health authorities advise people to take precautions to reduce the possibility of exposure to the COVID-19 virus and to slow the spread of the disease. In particular, the CDC recommends that people keep physical distance between themselves and others. This technique, known as social distancing, is especially important for people who have a higher health risk should they contract the disease. The CDC also recommends that employers take steps to minimize exposure between employees and the public and to consider the public health and safety when scheduling public events.

Therefore, in order to protect public health and to reduce the size of public gatherings and unnecessary travel, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maine issues the following order, effective immediately:

1. All trials and evidentiary hearings scheduled to commence at any time during the Covered Period are hereby continued generally. All such trials and evidentiary hearings will be rescheduled at a later date. The “Covered Period” is the period of time beginning on the date of this order and continuing through (and including) April 17, 2020.
2. During the Covered Period, all other hearings will take place as scheduled, except that participation in all such hearings must be accomplished through telephonic means. Members of the bar must utilize CourtCall; self-represented parties and any member of the public wishing to observe a hearing must contact the Clerk’s office for instructions on how to utilize a conference call service. During the Covered Period, the Court’s prohibition on the use of cell phones for telephonic participation (whether through CourtCall or otherwise) is lifted.
3. Due to the fluidity of the situation, the Court may alter or amend this order as may be necessary to achieve the stated goal of protecting the public health while, at the same time, continuing to fulfill the Court’s mission and its duties to litigants and the public.
4. At their discretion, judges may continue to hold hearings, conferences, and bench trials by videoconference or other similar means. Hearings, including evidentiary hearings, may be conducted in person when necessary to avoid immediate and irreparable harm.

SO ORDERED.

Date: March 16, 2020

/s/ Peter G. Cary

Peter G. Cary, Chief Judge
United States Bankruptcy Court

/s/ Michael A. Fagone

Michael A. Fagone
United States Bankruptcy Court