

**FILED**

**MAR 17 2020**

**IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF RANKIN COUNTY  
THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI**

**LARRY SWALES**  
Chancery Clerk, Rankin County

**ORDER REGARDING COURT OPERATIONS  
DURING NATIONAL STATE OF EMERGENCY**

On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency due to the pandemic outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

On March 14, 2020, the Governor of the State of Mississippi declared a statewide state of emergency regarding COVID-19.

On March 16, 2020, the President of the United States officially established guidelines recommending individuals avoid groups of more than ten people in order to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The chancery court must do what it can to protect the health, safety and welfare of court personnel, attorneys, litigants, witnesses, and other individuals that come in contact with the court system, and their families.

The Mississippi Supreme Court entered an Emergency Administrative Order on March 13, 2020, directing trial courts to “consider the avoidance of any proceedings that involve vulnerable persons or require witnesses or parties to travel from an infected area, increasing the chances of transmission of the disease.” Said order gave individual judges the discretion to postpone any trials on their docket scheduled through April 20, 2020. Further, the order provided that “trial judges are hereby authorized to exercise their sound discretion in extending deadlines, rescheduling hearings and trials and any other matters by case specific actions or by general orders.”

On March 15, the Mississippi Supreme Court entered an Emergency Administrative Order-2, which mandated that trial courts “not conduct any proceedings that require witnesses or parties to travel from an infected area or that involve vulnerable persons, increasing the chances of transmission of the disease.” This Order extended the date for which individual judges could postpone trials to May 15, 2020.

Both of the Orders from the Mississippi Supreme Court required trial courts to remain open to ensure constitutional rights are protected during this national emergency.

As a result, of the foregoing, the Rankin County Chancery Court will remain open to ensure constitutional rights are protected during this national emergency. Unless otherwise ordered by the appropriate agency of the State of Mississippi, the Judges and their staff remain available, telephonically, and/or electronically, to conduct administrative work of the Court.

All matters scheduled for an in-Court appearance before any Chancery Judge in the Rankin County Chancery Court set for hearing or trial through April 3, 2020, are continued, pending further Order of the Court. Attorneys are directed to obtain new hearing dates from the respective court administrators and to submit orders of continuance and/or re-setting to the Court.


Emergency matters will be heard as necessary.

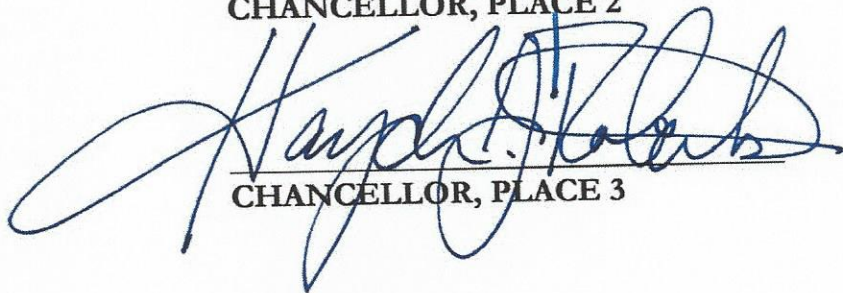
This Order does not restrict any Judge’s consideration of motions, or other matters, that can be resolved by the Court, without an in-person courthouse appearance. Further, this Order does not restrict any Judge’s ability to conduct a case-by-case exception to the continuances when reviewing or considering trials.

This Order is effective immediately, and shall expire April 3, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., unless extended by supplemental order of this Court.

**SO ORDERED**, this the 17<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.

  
CHANCELLOR, PLACE 1

  
CHANCELLOR, PLACE 2

  
CHANCELLOR, PLACE 3