



## PRESS RELEASE

### Portage County Courts are Issuing Third Order Regarding Emergency Temporary Measures:

Dated in Stevens Point, WI this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of April 2020  
By: Portage County Presiding Judge Thomas Flugar

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As a National Health Emergency continue, and in response to the March 20, 2020 Wisconsin Supreme Court Order Suspending All In-Person Proceeding in Circuit Court unless remote technology is not practical and adequate, and the Supreme Court's indefinite extension of said Order on April 15, 2020, the Portage County Courts are issuing the following additional emergency measures until further order of the Court:

1. In addition to essential cases, non-essential matters will now be heard by video-conference and telephone as determined by the judge; examples include:
  - a. Stipulated Divorces where all required paperwork (including the Findings of Fact/Judgment) is filed prior to the hearing;
  - b. Stipulated Plea and Sentencing Hearings where the defense counsel and defendant have thoroughly discussed the process, and a plea questionnaire is filed prior to the hearing;
  - c. Non-Evidentiary Motion Hearings in all areas of the law;
  - d. Other matters requiring *limited testimony* if approved in advance by the Court;

All jury trials for May and June 2020 will be rescheduled. As to conducting jury trials beyond June 30, the Courts will monitor the Covid-19 crisis, along with further Directives from the Supreme Court and guidance from Health Professionals and determine the practical reality of holding a jury trial while practicing social distancing.

Again, thank you for your anticipated cooperation and patience during this very difficult time.

Note: The order sent out to relevant parties as well as the Clerk of Courts' notice of hearing will include directions on how to appear by video-conference or telephone from a remote location. Although not perfect, the Courts have been successfully conducting all essential hearings this past month using WebEx Remote Access System (which is very similar to the Zoom System).

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