Small Claims Procedures During COVID-19
Updated 10/14/2020

The Wisconsin Supreme Court has ordered all local courts to develop a plan for court operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this process the Court has developed a COVID-19 Circuit Court Safety Plan. The Safety Plan is designed to allow court functions to continue while keeping court personnel and litigants safe.

The COVID-19 Circuit Court Safety Plan for Portage County has been approved by the Chief Judge of the 9th Judicial District. This small claims procedures order complies with the Safety Plan.

In general, for small claims litigants, this means:

1. All individuals attending in-person hearings will need to comply with the court's general order regarding courthouse safety. This order among other things requires all individuals entering the courthouse to observe social distancing protocols and wear facial coverings (masks).
2. Hearings will be conducted remotely by Zoom Conference, beginning on October 20, 2020, in certain types of cases.
3. Hearings conducted in person will be staggered to avoid large groups having to be present in the courtroom at one time.

To accomplish this, the Portage County small claims schedule will be revised as follows, effective starting with the November 3, 2020 return date:

1. **Claim for Money and Replevins Return Dates:**
    a. 7:30 a.m. by Zoom Conference Phone Appearance only
    b. Hearing notices will include the Zoom call-information*
    c. We will schedule a maximum of 65 hearings per return date. Additional hearings will be set for the next available return date.

2. **Eviction Return Dates:**
    a. 8:15 a.m. by Zoom Conference Phone or Video Appearance only
    b. Hearing notices will include the Zoom call-information*
    c. A maximum of 15 evictions will be scheduled per small claims date. Any additional filings will be set for a return date on the next available small claims date.
    d. Landlords must file all required documents, including affidavits of service, eviction notice(s), and any lease prior to the hearing.
    e. <u>All parties must be prepared to proceed with an in-person contested hearing at 9:30 on the same date.</u>

3. **Contested Eviction Hearings:**
    a. 9:30 a.m. (Same Date as Eviction Return Date) in person only in Courtroom E. As occupancy and social distancing in Courtroom E is limited, Litigants may asked to remain in the hallway until called by the bailiff.

4. **Motion Hearings, Pre-Trial Conferences and Rent & Damages Hearing:**
    a. 9:30 a.m. by Zoom Conference Phone or Video Appearance only.
    b. Hearing notices will include the Zoom call-information*
    c. All landlords in rent and damages hearings must file an itemization of damages prior to the hearing.

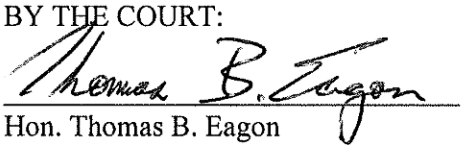
Circuit Court Portage County, Wis.
FILED
OCT 14 2020
LISA M. ROTH
CLERK OF COURTS

5. **Contested Hearings:**
   a. 10:00 AM in person.

This procedure will remain in place until further order of the court.

Dated and signed this 14th day of October, 2020, in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

BY THE COURT:



Hon. Thomas B. Eagon
Circuit Judge – Branch 1

Starting October 20, 2020:

***To Appear by Zoom Conference Video:**

Branch 1 – Honorable Thomas B. Eagon
https://wicourts.zoom.us/j/92400845011

***To Appear by Phone:**
Dial: 1-312-626-6799 and enter the meeting number:
Branch 1 Meeting #: 924 0084 5011