

United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

O R D E R

Restricting Public Access to the National Courts Building

Based on declared public health emergencies impacting Washington, D.C. and the National Capital Region and ongoing efforts to mitigate community transmission and the impact of COVID-19, there is an immediate need for the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit to restrict public access to the Howard T. Markey National Courts Building. These restrictions will be in place as a temporary measure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to minimize the risk to the health and safety of both court staff and the public conducting business with the court.

On behalf of the court and in consultation with the Chief Judge for the United States Court of Federal Claims, I find pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2071(e) that there is an immediate need for this Order altering the rules of this court, effective March 16, 2020, noon (Eastern).

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

- (1) There will be no public access to the Howard T. Markey National Courts Building and connecting buildings (“National Courts Building”) except on days in which a court hearing is scheduled. On those days, public access will only be permitted for (a) counsel and parties with a scheduled in-person hearing and (b) members of the press who present media credentials. Moreover, public access will be limited to the lobby, the courtroom of the scheduled hearing, the surrounding public corridors, the Clerk’s Office public reception area, and the attorney lounge areas.

- (2) All other areas of the National Courts Building, including the library, will be restricted to court staff and pre-authorized members of the public necessary to conduct, continue, and support essential functions within the courthouse.
- (3) Individuals, including pro se litigants and couriers, seeking to deliver or to file case documents may not enter the National Courts Building and must submit these items either through the U.S. Postal Service or by deposit in the court's night box located at the garage entrance on H Street NW, between 15th Street and Madison Place.
- (4) All deliveries from the U.S. Postal Service and third-party commercial carriers will be left in the designated area of the lobby. Any other deliveries must be coordinated ahead of time with appropriate court staff.
- (5) Audio recordings of court hearings, including those conducted telephonically, will be made available on the court's website after the conclusion of each argued case.
- (6) The Clerk's Office will continue to provide public assistance by telephone and by email.
- (7) Individuals who have been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus, who have had known contact with a person with the COVID-19 virus, who have been asked to self-quarantine, or who are experiencing flu-like symptoms (e.g., fever, shortness of breath, or cough) are directed not to enter the courthouse.
- (8) Nothing in this order restricts the access of any General Services Administration personnel, law enforcement and security officers, or their contractors from entering or conducting business in the courthouse as needed to protect and to maintain the operation and security of the National Courts Building and its occupants.
- (9) Nothing in this Order alters or extends any deadlines in any case.

- (10) These restrictions will remain in effect beginning March 16, 2020, at noon (Eastern) and continue until this Order is either amended or rescinded.
- (11) The Circuit Executive and Clerk of Court is directed to provide public notice of this Order and to take any necessary and proper actions to implement these restrictions.

March 16, 2020
Date

FOR THE COURT

Sharon Prost
Sharon Prost
Chief Judge