

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
DISTRICT OF VERMONT**

**In re:
Modified Bankruptcy Court Procedures
and Operations Under the Exigent
Circumstances Created by COVID-19**

**STANDING ORDER
20-09**

Since the Governor of the State of Vermont has declared a public health emergency throughout the State urging people to avoid large gatherings, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised people to take precautions in light of the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) outbreak and in particular to take all reasonable steps to avoid being exposed to the virus, this Court is modifying its procedures and operations to align with these recommendations.

Although in-person participation at hearings and conferences is generally more effective than telephonic participation, the exigent circumstances created by COVID-19 warrant application of a more liberal standard for remote participation in this Court's hearings and conferences.

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, effective immediately and subject to the evolving circumstances of COVID-19 in Vermont, and until further notice:

1. Scheduled Hearings and Conferences. All scheduled hearings and conferences will be conducted telephonically pending further order of the Court. Any party who wishes to appear in person at a scheduled hearing or conference may file a motion either to appear in person on the scheduled date, or to continue the hearing to a date when in-person appearances are likely to be reinstated, on notice to all affected parties and specifying the legal and factual basis for that request.
2. Evidentiary Hearings and Trials. Evidentiary hearings and trials will be rescheduled unless there are time-sensitive issues which must be addressed immediately. The Court will determine which trials and evidentiary hearings need to be rescheduled, on a case-by-case basis, based on the current record. The courtroom deputy will then contact the attorneys and *pro se* parties involved to set a mutually acceptable new date for the trial or hearing.
3. Regular Operations. The Bankruptcy Court remains open for all other business. Staff in the Clerk's Office will continue to receive and process mail, accept filings, enter filings on the dockets, be present at the intake desk (in Burlington only), and be available by telephone. Electronic filings may still be made through the CM/ECF system. The public is encouraged to continue utilizing Court services while following all applicable public health guidelines.

SO ORDERED.

March 16, 2020
Burlington, Vermont



Colleen A. Brown
United States Bankruptcy Judge