

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE
DISTRICT OF VERMONT**

**FILED
U.S. DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF VERMONT
MARCH 25, 2020**

In Re: Clerk's Office Operations Under the Exigent
Circumstances Created by COVID-19

GENERAL ORDER NO. 87

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has declared a national emergency, and the Governor of the State of Vermont has declared a public health emergency throughout the State;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised people to take precautions in light of the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) outbreak, and has noted that the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus, through, among other means, social distancing; and

WHEREAS, the Court continues to review its operations to identify measures that will help slow the spread of the virus by minimizing contact between persons, while at the same time preserving its core mission of serving the public through the fair and impartial administration of justice;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, **effective immediately and until further order of the Court**, that the District and Bankruptcy Court Clerk's Offices will not be open to the public but will continue to provide efficient service to the public and to litigants in the following manner:

1. **Manual filings.** All manual filings with the Court shall be made at a box designated for that purpose in the entrance lobby of each courthouse. Each box will have a date stamp to preserve the date of filing. This order does not affect filing through the Court's electronic filing system, which remains available.
2. **Payments.** Any person required to make payments to the Courts shall make such payment by check or money order and shall either mail (or send by FedEx or UPS) such payment to the Burlington Clerk's Offices or by depositing the payment in the box mentioned in paragraph 1. Each check or money order shall indicate the docket number of the case and the purpose of the payment (e.g., "restitution", or "filing fee"). Should any person subject to a payment order be unable to obtain a check or money order, that person may file a motion to request temporary relief from the payment obligation from the judge assigned to the case. Individual judges may

decide, in their discretion, to require some showing that the litigant has made reasonable efforts to obtain a check or money order.

Payments may also be made via telephone by providing credit card information to the Courts' intake staff.

The Bankruptcy Court does not accept personal checks or credit card payments from debtor's when filing a petition.

3. **Public computer terminal.** The public computer terminals in the Clerk's offices will no longer be accessible. Litigants may telephone the Clerk's Offices for each court unit to obtain information and to request necessary copies of documents from each litigant's case file. Electronic dockets continue to be accessible through PACER.
4. **Continuity of Operations.** Although the public intake counters are closed to the public, the judges and court staff are working full time on the cases pending before each court unit. During regular business hours, court employees will telework, process court filings, issue orders, schedule hearings, and be available to answer telephone calls from the public and bar. Court employees will perform other specified duties at the courthouse as required to support any scheduled hearings.

SO ORDERED.

Dated at Burlington, in the District of Vermont, this 25 day of March, 2020.

/s/ Geoffrey W. Crawford
Chief Judge