

To the Members of Our Local Bar Associations:

Thanks for your patience and understanding during our COVID emergency. We remind you that your first priority should always be your health and the health of our neighbors and communities.

I write to address management of our “non- Family Division” Civil docket.

At this point, these things are pretty clear:

1. Muskegon County is not yet an “e-filing” county, but you can mail your pleadings directly to Circuit Court records. They will be time stamped and filed. They will also be returned to you as staffing allows. We are working through our On-Base queues and are regularly signing stipulated and consent orders.
2. Motion practice. You can file any motions you want via “snail mail.” The Hall of Justice is still closed, with a few exceptions. You can expect that we will resolve many of these motions without oral argument, pursuant to MCR 2. 119 (E) (3).
3. Many of our staff are working remotely and handling scheduling and other matters. We do check email and will respond to your questions. If you have any questions about oral arguments, please call the assistant to that judge. We also encourage you to include your email in any correspondence so as to facilitate quicker responses.
4. Any civil court proceedings will be conducted pursuant to Supreme Court AO 2020-06. It will be via Zoom technology for the most part. You and other attorneys can then participate via the Judge’s PMR.

PMR numbers for the Civil Judges are:

Judge Annette R. Smedley	818 942 5162
Judge William C. Marietti	875 670 8644
Judge Timothy G. Hicks	737 093 1712

- At the Zoom hearing, please wait until you are invited into the meeting by our staff. This allows us to better control the hearing for record purposes.
5. TRO and emergency hearings. Please file the motion with Circuit Court Records and send a working copy of the documents directly to the assigned Judge. It might help if you called the court to alert us it was on the way. However, please (1) be kind in your assessment of what comprises an emergency and (2) and don't argue the case with our assistants.
 6. The April 17 case evaluation sessions have been transferred to May 22. We hope to maintain the same "line-up" of cases and panels.
 7. At this point, you should consider current trial dates to remain in place. The slowing of our criminal dockets, and the adjourning of **criminal** jury trials, actually creates some space for our civil dockets. Please call the assigned judge if you have questions.

Again, we thank you for your patience and understanding in these extraordinary times. With your help, we can do this.

Timothy G. Hicks
Chief Circuit Judge