

SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

*Phillips County Courthouse
P.O. Box 470
Malta, MT 59538
(406) 654-1062 Office
(406) 654-2363 Fax*

Yvonne Laird
District Judge

Kathy King
Court Administrator

Kelley A. Barstad
Court Reporter

Phillips County - Malta
Blaine County - Chinook
Valley County - Glasgow

March 16, 2020

Seventeenth Judicial Bar

RE: Coronavirus Procedures

To All Practicing in the Seventeenth Judicial District:

In response to the coronavirus, Chief Justice McGrath issued a memo on Friday, March 13, 2020, expressing the intent of the judicial branch to continue to provide services during the pandemic. Over the weekend the situation has developed rapidly and will continue to do so, and the seriousness of the situation cannot be minimized or denied. However, as Montanans, particularly those from the hi-line, we are not prone to panic and are used to and capable of getting what needs to be done, done in adverse situations.

Although our District has not moved to electronic filing, there is no need for anyone, attorneys, staff or pro se litigants, to go to the courthouses to file any documents. Please file any filings by email, U.S. mail, or fax. Limiting in person contact is crucial at this time so we do not overwhelm our healthcare system and to keep the vulnerable members of our community safe and healthy.

In that light, until the situation has resolved itself, unless personal appearance is mandated, the Seventeenth Judicial District will conduct all hearings telephonically or by JVN. To appear telephonically please use the following number for the County of the hearing:

Valley County: 1-406-449-7478 and when prompted dial 2043#

Phillips County: 1-406-449-7478 and when prompted dial 2042#

Blaine County: 1-406-449-7478 and when prompted dial 2041#

To appear by video, if you do not have JVN-capable equipment, download the Polycom Real Presence App on your device. The person MUST use their data package and CANNOT use their WI-FI (due to firewall issues). The number allows that person onto the state network. Please do not use your speaker phone as the connection is altered. Please dial the following number for the County of the hearing:

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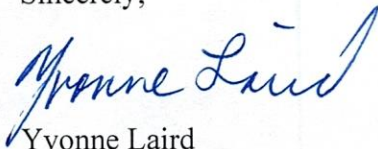
Valley County: 161.7.29.142##4920061
Phillips County: 161.7.29.142##4920043
Blaine County: 161.7.29.142##4920003

If you need assistance, please contact the Clerk of Court's Office in the county you are appearing or my Judicial Assistant Ms. King, in advance of the scheduled hearing.

On Sunday, March 15, 2020, the CDC recommended no gatherings of more than 50 people be held for sixty (60) days and today President Trump recommended no gatherings of more than 10 people. Therefore, all civil jury trials will be vacated and reset following the expiration of the CDC's recommendations. If you are representing a client in a criminal trial, please consult with your client and discuss waiving speedy trial and continuing any jury trial until the CDC's recommendation on limiting gatherings of people expires. As the President has declared a National Emergency, the Court will continue to monitor the situation and may, if deemed necessary, continue criminal jury trials as the Court deems appropriate given the situation.

As this situation develops, the Court will continue to adapt and offer guidance to practitioners and the public. Please make every effort to keep yourselves and your families safe.

Sincerely,



Yvonne Laird
District Court Judge