



**SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT, STATE OF COLORADO
ADAMS AND BROOMFIELD COUNTIES**

**ADDENDUM TO EIGHTH AMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER REGARDING
COURT OPERATIONS UNDER COVID-19 EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 9, 2020
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE AND ORDER**

Issued October 21, 2020

ADDENDUM to 2020-01 A8

In light of the public health risk posed by COVID-19 (“novel coronavirus”) and the advisories and information circulated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and the Tri-County Health Department (TCHD), recommending active steps to slow the spread of the disease and precautions to reduce the risk of exposure, the 17th Judicial District Courts and Probation will continue to operate in an emergency status.

I issued the *Eighth Amended Administrative Order Regarding Court Operations Under COVID-19 Effective October 9, 2020 Until Further Notice and Order* on October 9, 2020. On October 16, 2020, TCHD issued a public health order to limit public and private gatherings in Adams County in an attempt to reduce the recent surge in cases and thereby protect both the public’s health and the economy. Contact tracing and case investigation revealed that many people who have tested positive for COVID-19 have attended public or private gatherings. As of October 15, 2020, Adams County had an incidence rate of 313/100,000 population. Adams County has been beyond the State’s threshold for Level II of Safer at Home since September 28, 2020. TCHD hopes the public health order will pull Adams County back within limit of Level II by reducing the number of COVID-19 cases.¹ The order went into effect October 16, 2020 and will remain in effect until November 1, 2020.

The CDPHE prepares statewide tables of two-week cumulative incidence rates and current epidemic curve. These tables are updated daily and can be viewed through the CDPHE website at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/data>. Adams County is currently on the

¹ Tri-County Health Department News, Posted on October 16, 2020

Safer Level II with a two-week cumulative incidence rate of 395.8/100,000. This very high incident rate moves the Level dial towards Stay at Home, the most severe Level. Adams County two-week average positivity rate is 8.5%, which is higher than the surrounding counties. The CDPHE indicated it will follow up with Adams County in ten days to assess the county's metrics and mitigation progress. If the county's incidence rate has not significantly decreased, the CDPHE states it will move the county to a more restrictive level.²

Adams County recently implanted a mitigation plan to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in response to the surge in cases. As part of that plan, the county launched a new campaign to encourage residents to remain vigilant. Like the county, leadership in the 17th Judicial District, including judicial officers, executives, administration and supervisors, are committed to swift actions and targeted strategies to fight COVID-19. Thus, we are taking voluntary mitigating steps for the health and safety of our courthouse community and the community we serve as described more fully below.

The Adams County Justice Center, pre-COVID-19, typically has 1800-2000 visitors per day. Since March 2020, the average daily rates range from 150 to nearly 800 visitors, even after jury trials started up again on September 21, 2020. Although we are managing the number of visitors quite well, we have had a recent surge in COVID-19 positive employees. On Friday October 16, we learned we had three positive test results among court personnel. On October 20, 2020, we were notified of a fourth positive test result, with all four occurring within 21 days. In response to the very concerning situation, action was taken immediately.

On Friday October 16, 2020, we met with the consulting TCHD liaison to discuss the positive test results. Next, the 17th JD Executive Committee met on an emergency basis to discuss the urgent issues. Following the Executive Committee meeting, we conducted an emergency judicial officer and supervisor meeting. These meetings culminated with the good decision to close the Adams County Justice Center on Monday, like a snow day. The purpose of Monday's meeting was to examine and reset our current practices in light of the concerning COVID-19 numbers. Finally, we ended the day by meeting again with TCHD, specifically, Jennifer Ludwig, Deputy Director of TCHD.

TCHD determined that the Adams County Justice Center is not in an "outbreak" status. Highlighting the most relevant reasons: the three diagnoses occurred with employees working on separate floors and wings of the ACJC, the cases are unrelated and these persons had nominal prolonged contact with any other individuals. We notified TCHD that we had 6 additional symptomatic employees currently at home and in various stages of symptoms and testing. Again, TCHD advised us that we have taken all necessary precautions. Contact tracing indicates that three positives in the past 14 days are likely unrelated to work exposure, meaning they were exposed to a positive person outside the building like at a picnic, birthday party or conference. Further, they do not work close to one another, so it is not unlikely that the positive diagnosis occurred due to contact with another worker in the building. Data

² Letter to Adams County Commissioners from CDPHE Executive Director Jill Ryan dated October 16, 2020.

shows the increase is due to public gatherings, thus the public health order limits those to 5 people.

We will always comply fully with the recommendations of TCHD, but we will also take extra precautions if circumstances dictate. Under these concerning circumstances, we are taking additional mitigating steps for the health and safety of our personnel and our community.

This ADDENDUM modifies the Eighth Amended Administrative Order issued on October 9, 2020 as follows:

1. All jury trials that are not currently underway are suspended up to, but not including, December 7, 2020;
2. ACJC court personnel will work a hybrid 100% schedule- 60% in the ACJC, 40% from home until further notice;
3. The Clerk's office in Adams County will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. until further notice;
4. The First Appearance Center will be closed to the public by October 26, 2020 absent unforeseen circumstances.

Additionally, at an all staff and judicial officer meeting on Tuesday October 20, 2020, we have revitalized our commitment and invite all visitors to join us to:

- WEAR MASK IN COURT AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS
- MAINTAIN 6 FT DISTANCE BETWEEN EACH OTHER
- WASH HANDS REGULARLY OR USE HAND SANITIZER FREQUENTLY
- REGULARLY SANITIZE HIGH TOUCH SURFACES LIKE CELL PHONES, KEYBOARDS MOUSES AND HEADSETS
- STAY HOME WITH ANY COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND ISOLATE WHEN SICK OR COVID-19 POSITIVE
- GET TESTED AT THE ONSET OF COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR NOTIFIED OF CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE POSITIVE
- WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD RESILIENCE AND MANAGE JOB STRESS
- CONTINUE TO USE VIRTUAL AND TELEPHONE HEARINGS AS THE PREFERRED METHOD WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Probation: The 17th Judicial Probation Department is also scaling back operations through December 7, 2020. Probationers will be reporting in person or virtually based on level of risk (higher risk will be reporting in person and lower risk will be reporting virtually). Most

Presentence Investigation and Alcohol Evaluation interviews will continue to be done in person (first time offenders will be interviewed virtually for an Alcohol Evaluation) pending Monday's decision on the County's level of openness. Employees will be rotating in office two days per week and working from home three days per week. Coverage will be available in each office on a daily basis. The Courthouse Probation Office will be closed through December 7.

SO ORDERED this 21st day of October, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.

By the COURT,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily E. Anderson".

EMILY E. ANDERSON
Chief Judge
Seventeenth Judicial District