

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

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**AMENDED GENERAL ORDER ON CONTINUED OPERATIONS DURING  
COVID-19 NATIONAL EMERGENCY**

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On January 31, 2020, the Secretary of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency in response to COVID-19 outbreak. The District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin continues to operate under an updated general order limiting its operations in response to the public health emergency.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises to implement operational plans that, among other things, implement telework procedures, limit the number of employees at the workplace, deliver services remotely, and adjust practices to reduce close contacts with persons from outside the workplace. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html> (last visited October 29, 2020).

To these ends, the Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin modifies its operations as follows until further notice:

- 1) The court will conduct all hearings by telephone unless specifically ordered otherwise.
  - a) **Appearance at, participation in, and observations of hearings must be by telephone**, unless ordered otherwise; call-in information is as follows:
    - For hearings before **Chief Judge Halfenger** call (888) 684-8852, access code: 7183566#.
    - For hearings before **Judge Hanan** call (888) 808-6929, access code: 9122579#.
    - For hearings before **Judge Perhach** call (888) 675-2535, access code: 9918878#.

- b) The court determines that the COVID-19 national emergency constitutes good cause in compelling circumstances (see Fed. R. Civ. P. 43(a) incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9017) to **permit testimony to be taken electronically** (by telephone or video conference). Based on this determination, the court expects to conduct many evidentiary hearings, including, but not limited to, hearings on fee waivers, requests to continue or impose the automatic stay, requests to modify the automatic stay, requests to approve reaffirmation agreements, requests to approve fee applications, and confirmation hearings, by telephone or video conference. The court will undertake to notify parties when converting hearings previously scheduled to be held in person to being held telephonically or by video conference.
- 2) In continuing to provide essential functions during the COVID-19 national emergency, most court staff will be teleworking to best implement a physical-distancing policy. As a result, counsel and parties who seek information about or relief from the court on specific matters, including rescheduling hearings, should make their inquiries and requests in writing, either by letter or motion. Persons making telephonic inquiries of the Clerk or court staff, about scheduling hearings or otherwise, should be prepared to leave a message; staff will be monitoring voicemails and will endeavor to act on them as soon as practical under the circumstances.
- 3) The court expects to be able to continue minimal in-person staffing of the Clerk's Office during its regular hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., except legal holidays, to receive pro se filings, but Clerk's Office staff will not review schedules or otherwise meet with pro se filers while operating under this COVID-19 National Emergency Plan.
- 4) The court's pro se help desk is endeavoring to conduct some in-person operations, potentially supplemented by video or telephonic remote assistance undertakings.
- 5) The court is endeavoring to conduct some Lou Jones events by Zoom video conferencing for the remainder of 2020, continuing into 2021.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

Dated: October 30, 2020

s/ G. Michael Halfenger

G. Michael Halfenger

Chief Judge, United States Bankruptcy Court  
for the Eastern District of Wisconsin