

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**TWELFTH GENERAL ORDER
REGARDING COURT OPERATIONS
UNDER THE EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY COVID-19**

This General Order is being issued in response to the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have officially declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic. In response to the spread of COVID-19, a national emergency has been declared, and Governor Sununu has declared a state of emergency. The Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AO) has recommended that organizations limit public gatherings. The AO has also recommended that the courts conduct in-court hearings only when absolutely necessary and to have all or most court employees telework.

Further, on March 26, 2020, Governor Sununu issued an emergency order requiring New Hampshire citizens to stay home. The Governor extended that order twice. While the stay-at-home order expired on June 15, 2020, the State of New Hampshire continues to promote that citizens are safer at home.

Therefore, in order to protect public health, and in order to reduce the size of public gatherings and unnecessary travel, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Hampshire issues the following order, effective immediately:

1. The United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Hampshire shall remain closed to the public until further notice. Notwithstanding the fact that the Court is closed to the public, and consistent with Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 5001, the Court shall be deemed always open for the purpose of filing any pleading or other proper paper, issuing and returning process, and filing, making, or entering motions, orders and rules.
2. While the Court is closed to the public, court staff will be teleworking during regular business hours and will be available to assist the public via telephone at 603-222-2600. Court employees may perform specified duties at the courthouse as required.
3. The Clerk of the Bankruptcy Court will accept the filing of new petitions, motions, pleadings, notices, and other papers through one of several means: (1) through the Court's Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system; (2) through an e-mail, with the appropriate document or documents attached in PDF format, sent to nhbnofee@nhb.uscourts.gov; (3) through physical deposit in the depository box located behind the Cleveland Federal Building, which must be accompanied by either (a) an e-mail to nhbnofee@nhb.uscourts.gov, indicating the filer's name, the case name and number, and the date and time at which the filing was placed into the depository box or (b) a telephone call to 603-222-2600 to confirm the deposit; and

(4) through any other method expressly authorized by the Clerk, who can be reached at 603-222-2600. The Court continues to accept documents through the U.S. Mail as permitted by the Court's Local Bankruptcy Rules and Administrative Orders. All existing requirements pertaining to signatures on all documents submitted for filing, including proofs of claims, remain in effect.

4. All trials and evidentiary hearings scheduled to commence between the date of this order and April 2, 2021, are hereby continued generally. All such trials and evidentiary hearings will be rescheduled at a later date, after notice and opportunity for hearing.

5. Participation in all other hearings between the date of this order and April 2, 2021, must be accomplished through telephonic means. Attorneys must utilize CourtCall. Self-represented parties and any member of the public, who wish to observe or participate in a hearing, must contact the courtroom deputy at 603-222-2644 to receive instructions on how to do so.

6. Hearings, conferences, and trials may be conducted by videoconference or, in appropriate circumstances, in person at the Rudman Courthouse, at the discretion of the presiding judge.

7. Due to the fluidity of the situation, the Court may alter or amend this General Order or issue additional or superseding General Orders as may be necessary to achieve the stated goal of protecting the public health while, at the same time, continuing to fulfill the Court's mission and its duties to litigants and the public.

SO ORDERED.

Date: December 14, 2020

/s/ Bruce A. Harwood
Bruce A. Harwood
Chief Bankruptcy Judge