



United States District Court for the District of Utah Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Plan

This document provides guidance for sustaining our court's essential functions and services to the extent they are impacted by a local outbreak of the coronavirus. Because information about this global outbreak is rapidly evolving, we are closely monitoring information from local and national agencies about best practices to implement in the workplace to mitigate exposure or the spread of this virus. We will work diligently to keep court employees and others in the courthouse updated about changes to our protocols as we respond to this growing health concern. As the coronavirus impacts our local community and court operations, the following three-phase plan will guide our response:

Phase I – Prevention and Mitigation

In Phase I, which is where we are now, the court will operate as usual while collaborating with other federal agencies to minimize exposure to this virus in the courthouse. Additionally, the court is implementing the following mitigation protocols:

- Instructing employees to stay home when they have cold or flu symptoms that include signs of a fever, a cough, or shortness of breath. Employees are encouraged to remain home until they are free of these symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants).
- Directing employees to self-quarantine if they have recently traveled to any of the high-risk countries (as designated by the CDC) or if they have been exposed to anyone in the past 14 days who may have the coronavirus infection (COVID-19).
- Advising supervisors to work with employees who have these symptoms to adequately address sick leave or teleworking options.
- Asking attorneys who are scheduled to appear at court proceedings to contact the assigned judge's chambers if they have a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or if they have been exposed to anyone in the past 14 days who may have COVID-19.
- Denying entrance to any courthouse visitor who (1) has traveled to, resides with, or has had close contact with someone who has been to any of the high-risk countries within the last 14 days; (2) has been asked to self-quarantine by any hospital or healthcare agency; or (3) has been diagnosed with or has had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Excusing prospective jurors or jurors who are experiencing these symptoms or who meet the criteria addressed above.
- Emphasizing that employees should always use respiratory etiquette (coughing or sneezing into a tissue or an elbow) and thorough hand-washing hygiene (washing hands frequently with soap for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60%–95% alcohol).

- Encouraging employees to avoid shaking hands and to maintain a distance of 6-8 feet between themselves and anyone who appears to be sick. This is often referred to “social distancing.”
- Posting educational material geared toward stopping the spread of germs at the courthouse.
- Providing hand sanitizer, tissues, disinfectant wipes, or masks in locations such as the court entrance, near elevators, and in chambers and courtrooms, and encouraging employees to frequently wipe down their workspace surfaces.
- Increasing routine environmental cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace with hospital-grade disinfectants.

Phase II – Cancellation of Events or Partial Courthouse Closure

The Chief Judge and Clerk of Court will determine whether to enter Phase II after considering guidance from the local health officials, the CDC, or the AO. If Phase II becomes necessary, additional mitigation protocols will be implemented to further reduce the risk of exposure to the coronavirus. The Chief Judge and Clerk of Court will determine whether and to what extent court operations will be affected.

Specifically, they will evaluate (1) which employees will physically report to the courthouse to maintain operations and which employees may telework; (2) the need to cancel non-essential events such as CLEs, trainings, naturalization ceremonies, court yoga classes, and other group gatherings; (3) holding some court proceedings by video or teleconference, in lieu of in-person proceedings; and (4) postponing some jury or bench trials. If the court reaches Phase II, the Chief Judge will issue a General Order informing employees, the federal bar, building tenants, and the public about the status of court operations.

Phase III – Complete Courthouse Closure

The Chief Judge and Clerk of Court will close the courthouse if mandated by Executive Order or an emergency order from local health officials. Some court operations, however, may continue during a courthouse closure. When a court closure is advised but not mandated, the Chief Judge and Clerk of Court will make a decision whether to close the courthouse after considering the guidance of local and national health officials. If the court reaches Phase III, the Chief Judge will issue a General Order informing employees, the federal bar, building tenants, and the public about the status of court operations.

General Orders addressing these matters will be emailed to active members of the court’s bar and posted on the court’s website. If you have questions about this plan or the court’s preparedness, please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk of Court or Chief Deputy Clerk of Court by calling 801-524-6100.