

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

In re: Limited Operations Due to COVID-19
Pandemic – Authorization To Use
Video and Telephone Conferencing

Administrative Order

20-AO-025

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Congress has passed legislation authorizing the use of video and telephone conferencing, under certain circumstances and with the consent of the defendant, for various criminal case events during the course of the COVID-19 emergency. See The CARES Act, H.R. 748. The Judicial Conference of the United States has also found that emergency conditions due to the national emergency declared by the President have affected and will materially affect the functioning of the federal courts generally.

As Chief Judge, and pursuant to Section 15002(b)(1) of the legislation, I hereby authorize the use of video conferencing, or telephone conferencing if video conferencing is not reasonably available, for all events listed in Section 15002(b) of the legislation.

Pursuant to Section 15002(b)(2), I further specifically find that felony pleas under Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure and felony sentencings under Rule 32 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure cannot be conducted in person in this district without seriously jeopardizing public health and safety. As a result, if a judge in an individual case finds, for specific reasons, that a felony plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice, the judge may, with the consent of the defendant after consultation with counsel, use video conferencing, or teleconferencing if video conferencing is not reasonably available, for the felony plea or sentencing in that case. Judges may also use this authority for equivalent events in juvenile cases as described in Section 15002(b)(2)(B).

Pursuant to Section 15002(b)(3) of the legislation, this authorization will remain in effect for 90 days unless terminated earlier. If emergency conditions continue to exist 90 days from the entry of this order, I will review this authorization and determine whether to extend it.

IT IS ORDERED.

FOR THE COURT:

s/Denise Page Hood
Denise Page Hood
Chief Judge