

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA**

IN THE MATTER OF	§	
	§	
ADOPTION OF CONTINGENCY	§	GENERAL ORDER 2020-2
PROTOCOL TO ADDRESS	§	
LIMITATIONS ON COURT	§	
OPERATIONS DUE TO PUBLIC	§	
HEALTH AND SAFETY CONDITIONS	§	

**GENERAL ORDER ADOPTING HEARING PROTOCOLS THAT MAY BE
IMPLEMENTED UNDER CERTAIN PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY CONDITIONS**

The Court has determined that the adoption of a protocol for public health emergencies that impact Court operations is appropriate. By adopting the attached protocol, parties-in-interest may be better able to comply with the exigencies that have arisen related to the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Therefore, the Court adopts the attached Protocol and activates its use until further Court Order.

DATED: March 13, 2020.

FOR THE COURT:



MEREDITH S. GRABILL
UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

PROTOCOL FOR EMERGENCY PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY CONDITIONS

Purpose and Implementation

- A. This Protocol applies in all bankruptcy cases and proceedings when parties, witnesses, judges, or staff are unable to attend scheduled hearings due to a declaration by state, local, or federal officials that limit or restrict the Court's ability to hold hearings. The protocol will be invoked by the Chief Judge of the United States Bankruptcy Court. The Order invoking this Protocol will be posted on the Court's Web site and distributed by the Clerk to all CM/ECF users by e-mail. The Order will include appropriate modifications, as circumstances warrant. The invocation of the protocol will be terminated by a termination Order, also posted on the Court's Web site and distributed by e-mail. The period from the invocation through the termination of the protocol is the "Protocol Period."

Hearings

- A. Hearings may be scheduled or rescheduled by the Court to be heard during the Protocol Period:
1. Hearings will be conducted telephonically or via video conference.
 2. Notice of the dockets for upcoming chapter 13 panel hearings will be posted on the Court's Web site and will be distributed by the Clerk to all CM/ECF users by e-mail.
 3. Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, regularly scheduled motion day hearings will only be held for matters where there is a statutorily imposed deadline for the conduct of the hearing, including, but not limited to, the deadlines imposed by 11 U.S.C. §§ 333, 362, 521, 1188, 1189, 1129(e), and 1324(b).
 4. Notice of all other hearings will be entered on the docket of the case by the Clerk in each case in which a hearing is scheduled by the Court.
 5. Parties and counsel are responsible for monitoring the Court's Web site and the dockets of their cases.
 6. Telephonic and/or video conference attendance at hearings is required on the same basis as would otherwise be required for attendance at hearings in the absence of the invocation of this protocol.
- B. During the Protocol Period, hearings may be held by the judge assigned to the case, or by any other bankruptcy judge.

- C. After the Protocol Period, the Court may reschedule previously canceled hearings to be conducted in the ordinary course.
- D. To the extent a hearing on a matter is necessary, the Court will conduct non-evidentiary hearings via telephone.
- E. Attorneys and parties-in-interest wishing to participate in non-evidentiary hearings must dial in to hearings using the following dial-in numbers and conference codes:

- 1. Judge Grabill, Section A:

Dial-in Number: 1-302-202-1110

Conference Code: 305868

- 2. Judge Brown, Section B:

Dial-in Number: 1-302-202-1104

Conference Code: 277688

- F. Do not place your telephone on hold. You are requested to mute your phone until your case is called. Parties may not participate by speakerphone. When you dial into a hearing, you are participating in a court proceeding and are bound by the normal rules of courtesy and attention.
- G. Telephonic hearings will be recorded using the Court's digital recording system or other external recording technology associated with the telephone dial-in number. If the Court's digital recording system is inaccessible, the recordings using the recording technology associated with the telephone dial-in number will be made available to the public in accordance with the Clerk's standing policy and will constitute the official Court record.
- H. Each person who speaks at a telephonic hearing must restate that person's name each time that person speaks. That information will assist the Court during the hearing and will assist any transcribers of the audio recording.
- I. In the event that an evidentiary hearing is required, both sections of the Court will utilize a video-conferencing service located at the Internet site www.join.me in addition to audio connection through the above-listed dial-in numbers. Witnesses must appear by both audio and video connection. The judge will issue directions for the exchange and filing of witness and exhibit lists and the exhibits themselves into the record, as well as instructions for accessing www.join.me in advance of the hearing.

Requests for Emergency Hearings

- A. During the Protocol Period, emergency hearings must be requested in accordance with the local rules.

Self-Calendaring and Hearing Settings

- A. Unless otherwise ordered, hearing settings remain the same in accordance with the Motion Day Calendars listed for each section of this Court on the Court's Web site.

Section 341 Meetings

- A. Section 341 meetings of creditors conducted by the United States Trustee's Office, the Standing Chapter 13 Trustee's Office, and Panel Chapter 7 Trustees will either be postponed and rescheduled or held telephonically, depending on the policies of those offices, which will be issued separately. Parties and counsel are responsible for monitoring the Court's Web site, the Web sites of those trustees, and the dockets of their cases for information regarding Section 341 Meetings in their cases.

Variance from Protocol

- A. Each Judge may vary this protocol on a case-by-case basis by issuing orders in individual cases.
- B. As circumstances warrant, this protocol may be amended on an emergency basis. Any amendments will be published on the Court's Web site and distributed by e-mail to all CM/ECF users.