

SHAWN S. TAYLOR

Mayes County Courthouse
One Court Place, Suite 240
Pryor, Oklahoma 74361-3455
(918) 825-0960



Craig County Courthouse
210 West Delaware, Suite 204
Vinita, OK 74301
(918) 256-6560

District Judge
Twelfth Judicial District
Mayes, Craig & Rogers Counties

FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

May 6, 2020

Members of the Mayes County Bar Association:

As you well know, our work world has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. We are currently formulating a plan to handle all court business once the restrictions are lifted regarding access to the Mayes Courthouse and the limitations imposed by the Oklahoma Supreme Court are reduced. Every courthouse across the state has similar issues, but no statewide plan has been implemented to “restart” the court system. A more uniform system among the state legal community will likely develop over time, after considerable trial and error in the coming weeks. In the short term, you should expect each court to implement different procedures regarding how to conduct business.

As for Mayes County, you should expect more dockets with fewer cases with extended time allowed to have participants enter/exit the courtroom and courthouse. Restricted numbers of people at any one time in the courtrooms, waiting areas and courthouse can also be anticipated. All of these measures will be implemented to reduce the contact among participants and those of us who are in the courthouse every day. Video and telephonic conferencing can also be expected for those matters conducive to being handled in this manner. While each judge is receptive to participating in video conferencing, counsel will likely have the responsibility for creating the meeting format and ensuring client and witness participation at a remote location. The procedures and protocols for dockets are currently being developed to handle cases requiring a court appearance. Those protocols will be available in writing by March 15, 2020 and will be distributed to you by email as soon as they are finalized. As with all things affected by COVID-19, please recognize rapidly changing circumstances may require changes to those procedures and protocols at any time.

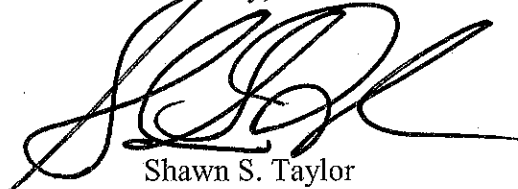
Another area of concern for the judicial branch is preventing all judges and their staffs from becoming simultaneously contaminated by COVID-19, which would effectively put the judicial system in Mayes County on hold until recovery or the expiration of any prescribed quarantine time

period. We have determined it necessary for the judges and judicial staff to isolate at home as well as have no contact between our offices.

As a result of this concern, some changes to our usual "open door" policy have already occurred. Access to the judicial hallway and judges' chambers has been temporarily suspended and your keycards will no longer provide that access. Documents for judges are to be left in the designated drop box within the Court Clerk's office. The Court Clerk will deliver the documents to each judge's office at 10:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. each day. Documents needing a judge's signature should be delivered to the Court Clerk's office for delivery to the judge in this way. Signed documents will be returned to the Court Clerk's office for filing from the judge on that same schedule. Arrangements to obtain copies of signed orders should be made with the Court Clerk's office just like any other filing. The Court Clerk will continue to accept filings by mail, email and fax as long as it is not prohibited by the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

We want to ensure you that we are attempting to work out procedures that allow you to get work done in an efficient and timely manner, while protecting the exposure risk to you and all of the court participants. Thank you for your patience during this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SST', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Shawn S. Taylor

SST: mh