

**SUPREME COURT OF OKLAHOMA AND OKLAHOMA COURT OF
CRIMINAL APPEALS**

**First Emergency Joint Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of
Disaster**

2020 OK 25 · Decided March 16, 2020

SUMMARY

This joint order of the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals establishes emergency procedures for Oklahoma district courts in response to the COVID-19 state of disaster. It cancels jury terms for 30 days, suspends specified deadlines and procedures, extends civil statutes of limitations by 30 days, encourages remote proceedings, and restricts access to court facilities for individuals posing COVID-19 risks.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals
JURISDICTION	Oklahoma
DECIDED	March 16, 2020
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The Supreme Court of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals issued a joint emergency administrative order governing Oklahoma district-court and appellate procedures during the COVID-19 state of disaster.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published emergency joint order

TOPICS

civil procedure

criminal procedure

appellate procedure

statute of limitations

sentencing

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

criminal procedure

appellate procedure

health law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. What temporary procedures should govern Oklahoma district courts and appellate courts during the COVID-19 state of disaster?

2. Whether jury terms, litigation deadlines, statutes of limitations, hearings, and other court proceedings should be continued or suspended for 30 days.
3. What restrictions and remote-access procedures should apply to persons entering or participating in court proceedings during the emergency.

HOLDINGS

1. All Oklahoma district courts must immediately cancel jury terms for the next 30 days, release jurors from service, refrain from summoning additional jurors without Chief Justice approval, and continue civil, criminal, and juvenile jury trials to the next available jury dockets.
2. Subject to constitutional limitations, all deadlines and procedures prescribed by statute, rule, or order in civil, juvenile, and criminal cases are suspended for 30 days, including applicable appellate rules and procedures.
3. The statute of limitations in any civil case is extended for 30 days from the date of the order.
4. Subject to constitutional limitations, assigned judges should reschedule non-jury trials, hearings, and pretrial settings, while handling emergency matters, arraignments, bond hearings, and other required proceedings on a case-by-case basis; remote participation should be used to the extent possible.
5. Specified persons, including persons diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, persons with specified symptoms, recent international travelers and close contacts, and persons under quarantine or isolation, are prohibited from entering designated court facilities; courts may also limit the number of persons entering those facilities.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Governor J. Kevin Stitt issued Executive Order 2020-07 on March 15, 2020, declaring an emergency in all 77 Oklahoma counties because of the impending threat of COVID-19. The courts issued the joint order to clarify procedures, encourage social distancing, and reduce risks to judges, court personnel, jurors, litigants, and the public.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The order was issued in response to Governor J. Kevin Stitt's March 15, 2020 emergency declaration concerning COVID-19. It established temporary statewide procedures for jury trials, deadlines, hearings, court access, and emergency proceedings.

DISPOSITION

other