

Village of Belleville Municipal Court

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COVID-19 Municipal Court Operating Plan for The Village of Belleville Municipal Court

The Municipal Court for Belleville, WI, submits the following operating plan in compliance with the Wisconsin Supreme Court's Order issued on May 22, 2020 (In re the Matter of the Extension of Orders and Interim Rule Concerning Continuation of Jury Trials, Suspension of Statutory Deadlines for Non-Criminal Jury Trials, and Remote Hearings during the COVID-19 Pandemic.)

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the municipal courts, this municipal court will implement the following protective measures:

Collaboration with Municipality:

- The Village of Belleville Municipal Court staff, the Village of Belleville Administrative staff, and the Belleville Police Department are working collaboratively to safely reopen and return to in-person court proceedings.
- The Village of Belleville Administrator and Deputy Clerk closed the Village Hall to the public indefinitely. This is typically where court proceedings have been held up to the COVID-19. It is likely the court will not be able to return to its previous location as it is also the location of the Belleville Food Pantry, which is required to follow USDA guidelines including contactless services until at least fall.
- Due to the village hall being closed to the public and per a mutual agreement, the temporary location for the Belleville Municipal Court proceedings will be moved to a nearby building that has limited use by other persons or organizations.

Court proceedings:

- The Belleville Municipal Court professional judicial assistant has been available by phone and/or email during established court office hours since the Belleville Village Hall has been closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Belleville Municipal Court will begin hearing non-essential in-person court proceedings no sooner than **June 16, 2020**.
- Juvenile hearings have been held telephonically prior to June 16, 2020, and may continue after that date.
- Any Notice of Court Date sent will have a court procedures information sheet along with a plea sheet included.
- Any person wishing to have their court case heard remotely will be assigned a date and time to place a call to the Belleville Municipal Court office to be heard by the judge.

- Judge Gehin accepts correspondence submitted in writing, including USPS, drop box, night deposit box, and email messages.

Dropbox:

- A night deposit box (drop box) is on the outside of the Village of Belleville Village Hall, which is available to drop off payment, pleas, and/or extension requests.
- Envelopes and a drop box system will be available during court proceedings.

Face coverings/Hygiene/Cleaning:

- All persons entering the courtroom will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
- Exceptions may be made only for a witness, if the court makes a finding on the record that it is necessary to remove the face covering for purposes of determining the credibility of the witness, or for health/ADA concerns.
- Face coverings will be provided to all persons attending a court hearing who do not have one.
- Hand sanitizer will be available upon entry and exit of the courtroom, including defendants, staff and counsel.
- The Village of Belleville Municipal Court staff will clean common areas touched by defendants and others after individual appearances.
- The Village of Belleville Municipal Court staff will clean the common areas of the courtroom at the completion of the court proceedings for the scheduled date.
- The Village of Belleville Municipal Court staff will use cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
- The Village of Belleville Municipal Court staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques.

Signage:

The following signs will be posted:

- Health alert – listing of symptoms and asking persons not to enter if showing symptoms
- COVID-19 Screening Tool – listing of symptoms and asking persons not to enter if showing symptoms
- Explanation of the spread of COVID-19
- Face coverings requirement
- Social distancing
- Use of hand sanitizer is encouraged

Social distancing and cleaning:

- All persons not from the same household will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.
- The Belleville Municipal Court Judge and staff will conduct business behind a 3 foot by 3 foot plexiglass tabletop barrier. Currently, there are two tabletop barriers to be used.
- The maximum number of persons allowed in the courtroom will be 10 and in compliance with any county regulations.
- Steel folding chairs will be used and arranged 6 feet apart.
- The Judge's bench, professional judicial assistant's table, and defendant table will be arranged 6 feet apart.

- Chairs, tables, door handles, and surfaces used in the court room will be wiped down with disinfectant cleaner between each appearance by a defendant.
- Entrances to the courtroom will be disinfected on a regular basis.
- Over-flow defendants will be required to remain outside the courtroom building or will be directed to remain in their vehicle until summoned by court personnel.
- Check-in will be completed verbally.

Payments:

- Payments will be accepted with a check or money order through the USPS or online at www.govpaynow.com.
- Envelopes and a drop box system will be available during court proceedings.
- A 3 foot by 3 foot plexiglass barrier with a small slot to exchange documents/obtain signatures will be used by the professional judicial assistant.

Screening upon entering:

- Health alert signs along with Screening questions will be posted.
- Persons entering the courtroom will be asked screening questions.

Pleas:

- A plea sheet will be available for defendants to use to submit a plea in writing.
- Pleas are accepted by email message, USPS, and drop box, and/or night deposit.

Pretrial conferences:

- Pretrial conferences have previously and will continue to be conducted telephonically.
- A pretrial conference form (with instructions) is provided to each defendant who has submitted a not guilty plea.

Website:

- The Belleville Municipal Court reopen plan will be posted on the municipal court website.

Duration:

- The Belleville Municipal Court will continue to follow this operating plan until further order by the Chief Judge of District V.

Dated this 10 of June, 2020.

Mary G. Behin (signature)

Mary G. Behin (print name)

Municipal Judge

Village of Belleville Municipal Court
(name of municipal court)