



Judicial Branch of the Crow Tribe

CROW TRIBAL COURT

P.O. Box 489 Crow Agency, Montana 59022
Telephone: 406-638-7400 Fax: 406-638-7415

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Announcement from the Judicial Branch of the Apsaalooke Nation regarding COVID-19, Crow Tribal Court Operations, and Preliminary Plan.

March 16, 2020 – Crow Agency, Montana – Chief Judge Dennis M. Bear Don't Walk, in response to the threat COVID-19 poses to the public health and safety of the Crow Tribal Community, has issued Standing Order No. 2020-02, immediately implementing the measures listed below, to ensure the safety of Crow Tribal Court staff, and members of the Crow Tribal community:

1. All travel on official Judicial Branch business is hereby suspended until further notice.
2. All Judicial Branch staff shall follow CDC recommended personal hygiene routines to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
3. All Judicial Branch staff shall work from home (if technologically feasible) or remain at home, when not required to be in the Office or Court to process pleadings and/or attend court hearings.
4. For at least the next two weeks, the Crow Tribal Court will remain open, but temporarily limit its operations as follows:
 - a. **Public Access:**
 - i. The Front Desk shall be open to accept filings and payments from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. M-F, and closed at all other times.
 - ii. Parties to existing cases are encouraged to agree to utilize electronic filing, pursuant to the Crow Rules of Civil Procedure and Crow Tribal Court Rules of Practice.
 - iii. All members of the public who are experiencing flu like symptoms, are asked to stay away from the Court, until further notice.
 - iv. Litigants and attorneys who arrive at court and report they are feeling unwell shall be asked to reschedule their appearance.

b. **Orders of Protection:**

- i. Emergency Civil Petitions for Temporary Orders of Protection may be filed between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. at the Front Desk; or between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., by contacting BIA-Law Enforcement Dispatch at: 406-638-2631; providing a brief summary of the reasons for filing, and leaving your phone number.
- ii. Emergency No-Contact Orders and Orders of Protection in Criminal matters shall continue to be processed by Law Enforcement, the Tribal Prosecutor, and the Criminal Court Judge, as identified in Title 8E of the Crow Law and Order Code.

c. **Civil Court:** All non-Emergent Civil Matters scheduled for an in-Court appearance through March 30, 2020, including any associated deadlines, shall be CONTINUED pending further order of the court; excluding: Civil Orders of Protection, Temporary Restraining Orders, and Child Custody matters.

d. **Criminal Court:** Adult Arraignments shall be conducted via video conference between the Court and the Rocky Mountain Regional Detention Center at the normally scheduled times; unless otherwise scheduled by the Criminal Court Judge.

- i. Attorneys or self-represented litigants scheduled for a jury trial through April 30, 2020 have the option, and are encouraged, to request a continuance or a bench trial by calling the Court. In such cases, the parties shall ensure that the defendant signs and files a waiver of speedy trial.

e. **Jury Duty:** All jurors defined by the CDC as “at-risk” shall be released from reporting for jury duty upon request made by such juror by phone call to the court. This includes anyone over the age of 60, or those who have underlying chronic health conditions. Jurors who report they are feeling ill must also be dismissed.

f. **Juvenile Court:** All non-Emergency hearings scheduled through March 30, 2020 are CONTINUED.

- i. This does not apply to:
 1. Juvenile Detention Hearings;
 2. Emergency Placement Hearings for Babies born on Methamphetamines;
 3. Emergency Child Protection Hearings; or
 4. Critical Review hearings.

- ii. The Juvenile Court shall send notice at a later date of all continued hearings in April, 2020.

5. The Court Administrator shall coordinate with Executive Branch emergency and disaster response representatives and be involved in all planning sessions held with tribal, federal, state, and local government agencies.
6. This order shall be effective until March 31, 2020, unless extended or modified by further order of the Court.
7. The Court Administrator shall transmit a copy of this order to the heads of the Executive and Legislative Branches, BIA-OJS Law Enforcement, and heads of the Agency and Regional BIA.
8. A copy of this Notice and S.O. 2020-02 shall be made available on the Crow Tribal Courts website under “Public Notices” at: <https://www.crowtribalcourts.org/public-notices.html>

For further information, please contact Julie Yarlott, Crow Tribal Court Administrator: (406) 638-7400 or JYarlott@CrowTribalCourts.org