

Memo

To: All attorneys that practice in the Lubbock, Abilene, Amarillo, and San Angelo Divisions
From: Judge Robert L. Jones
Date: March 16, 2020
Subject: The Coronavirus (COVID-19) and General Order 2020-05

Chief Judge Houser has today issued General Order 2020-05. If you have not reviewed the order, you should do so immediately. The purpose of the order is to restrict, as much as possible, in-person hearings and trials in the bankruptcy courts in the Northern District between March 16 and May 1, 2020.

I anticipate the General Order will raise questions with practitioners concerning how the order will apply to matters in the Lubbock, Abilene, Amarillo, and San Angelo Divisions. You will note that the order specifically addresses both preliminary hearings on stay motions and telephonic appearances in the Dallas and Fort Worth Divisions. The Lubbock, Abilene, Amarillo, and San Angelo Divisions set all stay motions for final hearings; we do not have preliminary hearings. And though I routinely permit, upon request, telephonic appearances for docket calls, I cannot allow telephonic appearances for in-person hearings that might be held in the Amarillo, Abilene, and San Angelo Divisions' courtrooms because the courtrooms do not have telephones.

To implement General Order 2020-05 in the Lubbock, Abilene, Amarillo, and San Angelo Divisions, I advise of the following:

1. All docket calls, beginning with the Lubbock dockets of March 18 and 19, and *including all chapter 13 dockets*, will be held as scheduled but will be held by telephone only. Ms. Graham will post the call-in instructions for the dockets. Debtors are excused from attending the chapter 13 dockets for all divisions. This means we will have no video or in-person docket calls.
2. For *all* stay motions or other hearings or trials that are already set or will be set on a docket between March 16, 2020 and May 1, 2020, I will request of counsel at the docket call if the parties will agree to a postponement of any hearing or trial to a date after May 1, 2020.

I am sure questions will arise that are not answered by the General Order or this memorandum. If you do have questions or concerns regarding a matter in the Lubbock, Abilene, Amarillo, and San Angelo Divisions, please contact Ms. Graham, my judicial assistant, Shelby Wimberley, or my clerk, Sara Kathryn Mayson. I will be available at all times; we will process orders as usual.

Your assistance and cooperation throughout this difficult time is greatly appreciated.