

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

GENERAL ORDER NO. 20-05

Trials and Evidentiary Hearings During COVID-19 Public Emergency

A state of emergency has been declared in response to the spread of COVID-19, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have urged reduced contact among people to slow the spread of the disease. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois finds that the COVID-19 emergency constitutes good cause in compelling circumstances for taking testimony by contemporaneous transmission other than in open court, *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 43(a) (made applicable by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9017), and so issues this order to protect public health.

1. Effective June 1, 2020, all trials and evidentiary hearings will be held by video using the Zoom for Government platform. No trials and evidentiary hearings will be held in the courthouse. Attorneys must direct their clients and witnesses *not* to appear in person at the courthouse for a trial or evidentiary hearing.^{1/}

2. The court will post on its web site a Model Pretrial Order for use in video trials and evidentiary hearings. Judges may modify the Model Pretrial Order to suit their preferences and the specific needs of the trial or hearing.

3. The court finds that Zoom for Government together with the Model Pretrial Order provide appropriate safeguards for taking testimony by contemporaneous transmission other than

^{1/} The court holds the necessary Zoom for Government licenses. Lawyers and witnesses do not need to purchase Zoom software or a license to participate in a trial or evidentiary hearing. There is no fee to participate, but regular telephone toll charges apply if the audio portion is accessed by phone.

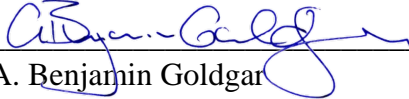
in open court. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 43(a).

4. Nothing in this order modifies Amended General Order No. 20-03. Motion calls will continue to be held telephonically using CourtSolutions, LLC.

5. This order supersedes all other orders and notices from individual judges concerning the trials and evidentiary hearings during the current emergency.

Dated: May 13, 2020

ENTERED FOR THE COURT:



A. Benjamin Goldgar
Chief Judge