Supreme Court of Arkansas

JOHN DAN KEMP
CHIEF JUSTICE

JUSTICE BUILDING
625 MARSHALL STREET
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201

PHONE (501) 682-6873
FAX (501) 683-4006
EMAIL john.dan.kemp@arcourts.gov

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To All Judges in Arkansas:

The Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Health has issued a "Directive Regarding Indoor Venues" effective January 2, 2021, which establishes guidelines for group gatherings of ten (10) or more people. Here is a link to the new directive:

https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/directive_indoor_venues_amended_1.2.21.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2dPs2g4FzMlWREaFeO4z9_6QOUE78977C3goi-tf02nX0M-b8AR-3iid0

In consultation with Dr. Joel Tumlison of the Arkansas Department of Health, who has been assigned by Dr. Nate Smith as liaison to the courts of Arkansas, I have been advised by Dr. Tumlison that the Directive was not intended for the courts of Arkansas.

Dr. Tumlison advises that courts in Arkansas should keep the number of persons attending in-person court proceedings to a number that would safely accommodate no more than the maximum number of persons allowable into the courtroom or facility being used to conduct court, using social distancing of at least six (6) feet between people and other recommended guidelines. He suggests that the number be kept as small as possible to conduct the court proceeding, but the courts are not limited to ten (10) people in attendance.

I hope this response will answer any questions that judges may have about whether the Directive applies to the courts.

Sincerely,

John Dan Kemp