STATE OF MICHIGAN
61ST DISTRICT COURT
KENT COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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MICHAEL J. DISTEL
Chief Judge
JENNIFER L. FABER
Chief Judge Pro Tempore

GARY P. SECOR
Court Administrator

Administrative Order 2020 – 02 (Supersedes LAO 2014-02)

ACCESS, INSPECTION, REPRODUCTION, AND CREATION OF COURT RECORDS

IT IS ORDERED:

This administrative order is issued in accordance with Michigan Court Rules 8.119(H) and 8.110(C)(8). The purpose of this order is to regulate requests for access, inspection, and reproduction of public court case records and to allow flexibility in providing approved court forms or creating new case records.

The clerk may not permit any case record to be taken from the court without the order of the court. The court may provide access to the public information in a register of actions through a publicly accessible website; however, all other public information in its case records may be provided through electronic means only upon request.

1. Court records addressed by this administrative order include:

   a) Records Kept by the Clerk of the Court. This includes case files, registers of action, numerical and alphabetical indexes, and calendars. MCR 8.119(D).

   b) Court Recordings, Log Notes, Jury Seating Charts, and Other Media. This includes video/audio/digital court recordings, notes, tapes, logs, backup tapes, discs, and any other medium used or created in the making of a record of proceedings and kept pursuant to MCR 8.108. MCR 8.119(F).

2. Procedures for accessing, inspecting, and reproducing nonpublic information and records are set forth in Component 19 of the Michigan Trial Court Records Management Standards, chart of Nonpublic and Limited-Access Court Records, Local Administrative Order 1 (friend of the court records), and Administrative Order 2006-2, Privacy Policy and Access to Records.

3. A list of court records, including those defined in MCR 8.119(E), that are not subject to public access and inspection is contained in the chart of Nonpublic and Limited-Access Court Records.

4. Court records are not subject to Freedom of Information Act requests. MCL 15.232(h)(iv) specifically exempts the judiciary from the Freedom of Information Act.

5. In accordance with MCR 8.110(C)(8), the court shall provide litigants with forms approved by the state court administrator at the cost of $1.00 per form.

   a) Parties will not be limited to a maximum of copies per each type of form requested.

   b) There will be no charge for forms requested by court-appointed attorneys on cases to which they have been appointed or for indigent parties.

   c) There will be no charge for forms prepared by the court.

   d) The circuit court or clerk of the court may not charge a fee for pro se forms for personal protection proceedings or motion forms for criminal post appeal relief. MCL 600.2950, 600.2950a, MCR 6.502(C).

6. Any person may inspect, at no charge, any case record or information contained in those records, regardless of format, unless access is restricted by statute or court rule, or a court order entered pursuant to MCR 8.119(I) and may obtain copies subject to the following regulations established in accordance with MCR 8.119(J).

   (a) General

      (i) All requests for case records identified in this administrative order and/or copies must be made on a "record/copy request form" and must specify a complete case number or party names except as provided under item (b) (v).

      (ii) Persons who do not have a complete case number or party names may review available case indexes to identify and select specific cases for inspection.

      (iii) Case records shall be reviewed at the public counter unless, in the discretion of court supervisory personnel, approval is granted to review records in the clerk's office based on available space, the type and number of records to be reviewed, and the length of time necessary to review them.

      (iv) Ensuring the right of immediate access to and public inspection of court records shall be a top priority, but may be limited by the availability of court staff to supervise the inspection.

   (b) Access

      (i) Requests for access to no more than two specific case files will be accommodated within an hour unless the files are not in the active file area. Requests for specific case records in storage will be accommodated within three working days.

(ii) Requests for access to more than three specific case files will be accommodated within a reasonable amount of time, depending on the total number of case files requested and the availability of court staff.

(iii) Case information requests from other courts that lack specific case numbers or party names shall be researched by this court. Requested information will be provided at no charge.

(iv) Requests to perform general traffic or criminal record checks that do not have specific case numbers or party names will not be researched by the court. They will be referred to the appropriate state agencies to obtain this information or to the available indexes referred to under subsection 6(a) (ii).

(v) Requests for the wholesale review of particular types of case records will only be considered if, in the court's discretion, the request will not unreasonably interfere with the discharge of court functions. The court is not required to develop special procedures for the convenience or cost/benefit of persons requesting access. This includes providing the means to access or reproduce the contents of materials that have been filed with the court pursuant to MCR 1.109(C)(2) that are in a medium for which the court does not have the means to readily access and reproduce those materials. With these types of requests, the court may specify the date, time, and manner in which access is to be granted. It will be the responsibility of those persons requesting access to make prior, acceptable arrangements with the court.

(c) Copies

(i) The court will provide a limited number of copies of documents (total 20 pages) at a cost of $2.00 for the first page and $1.00 per page for subsequent pages of the request for copies. Copies of documents in storage will be at the cost of $2.00 per page. Copies of transcripts filed with the court shall not exceed $.30 per page pursuant to MCL 600.2543.

(ii) Requests for more than 20 total copies of documents will be accommodated within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the (1) total number of pages to be copied, (2) availability of court staff and photocopying equipment, and (3) nature of the request, such as the degree to which court staff is required to identify, select, and review documents to be copied.

(iii) Attorneys, parties, and members of the public may use a portable electronic device to reproduce public court documents in a clerk's office as long as the device leaves no mark or impression on the document and does not unreasonably interfere with the operation of

the clerk's office. Individual documents must remain in the case file and may not be removed so as to retain case file integrity.

(iv) In order to preserve and maintain the integrity of court records and to prevent unreasonable interference with the discharge of court functions, persons will not be permitted to copy or otherwise duplicate court records using their own equipment, other than a portable electronic device as defined in MCR 8.115(C)(2)(a).

(d) New Record Creation

(i) Requests for creation of a new record, as defined in MCR 8.119(J)(5), will be granted only if creating the new record will not unreasonably interfere with the discharge of court functions. If granted, the request will be accommodated within a reasonable amount of time dependent upon the availability of sufficient public data within the body of case records (including related databases), and the ease with which those records can be identified and compiled.

(ii) Costs to provide a new record may not extend the actual cost of labor and supplies and the actual use of the system to develop, generate, and validate the accuracy of the record.

7. Access to court recordings, log notes, jury seating charts, and other media of court proceedings made pursuant to MCR 8.108 is not permitted.

8. Copies of court recordings, log notes, jury seating charts, and other media of court proceedings made pursuant to MCR 8.108 are not available.

Michael J. Distel
Chief Judge

7/30/2020
Date