

16th Judicial Circuit
County of Kane
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT K. VILLA
KANE COUNTY JUDICIAL CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The 16th Judicial Circuit Issues New Guidelines for Apprehensions and Public Demonstrations at Kane County Courthouses

June 30, 2026 – Kane County, IL. — The 16th Judicial Circuit has issued two general orders that set forth expectations for conduct on courthouse premises and procedures for apprehensions at or near court facilities. General Order 25.06 (entered May 2, 2025) addresses procedures in the apprehension of individuals in Kane County courthouses; General Order 26.09 (entered June 25, 2026) establishes guidelines for court facility access, public demonstrations, and safety related to protest activities.

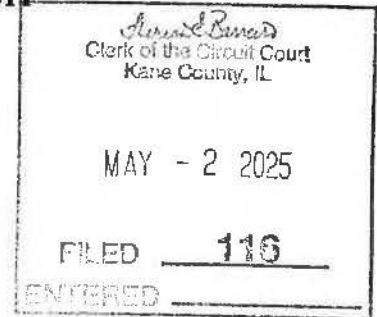
Together, these general orders are intended to balance protection of constitutional expression with the need to safeguard courthouse operations, preserve access for litigants, jurors, and the public, and maintain safety for court personnel and law enforcement. These orders clarify expectations for members of the public and law enforcement on courthouse property and provide procedures designed to protect constitutional rights while ensuring safety and uninterrupted court access.

Additional details and operative provisions are contained within General Orders 25.06 and 26.09, which accompany this release.

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IN THE SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GENERAL ORDER 25-06
Effective May 2, 2025



**IN THE MATTER OF
APPREHENSION OF
INDIVIDUALS IN THE
COURTHOUSES**

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WHEREAS, the following policy reflects and codifies the current working practice regarding the apprehension of individuals in the courthouses whether pursuant to a warrant or based upon probable cause, and

WHEREAS, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) recently issued interim guidance, *Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas*, including at or near courthouses, when it has credible information that a targeted alien is or will be present at a specific location, and

WHEREAS, ICE Enforcement and Removal Operation (ERO) Task Force has officially represented it is focusing on apprehending charged defendants in criminal cases, and not victims, witnesses, or other litigants appearing in family or civil court, and

WHEREAS, individuals entering the courthouses do so through the courthouse's security processes and checkpoints, thereby ensuring they are unarmed, which further minimizes the risk of injury to law enforcement, the public, and the wanted individual, and

WHEREAS, the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit is legally and ethically bound to uphold and adhere to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, the laws of the United States, and the laws of the State of Illinois, and

WHEREAS, federal law establishes procedures for the implementation, application, and enforcement of immigration laws, and

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois has enacted laws, including the Illinois Trust Act and the Voices of Immigrant Communities Empowering Survivors (Voices) Act, which prohibit Illinois entities from assisting or participating in federal civil immigration enforcement, and

WHEREAS, every Illinois judge is sworn to "support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Illinois,"

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

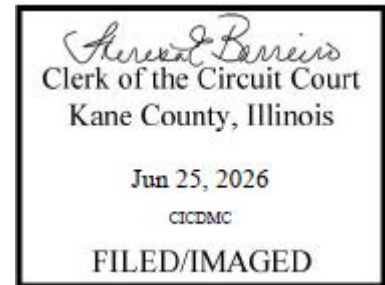
1. Local, State, and Federal law enforcement officers should notify court security and local law enforcement before apprehending individuals at or near the courthouses.
2. Local, State, and Federal law enforcement officers shall conduct necessary apprehensions of charged defendants discreetly to minimize the impact on court proceedings.
3. Such apprehensions shall occur after the defendant's court event has concluded.
4. Apprehension of the charged defendant may occur in the public areas of the courthouses, provided that the apprehension does not interfere with the use of said premises or the safety of others in that area. Apprehension in any other part of the courthouses shall be pursuant to the specific approval of the Chief Judge.
5. No apprehension shall take place within a courtroom unless pursuant to Court Order or exigent circumstances.

Entered this May 2, 2025, and effective May 2, 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert K. Villa', is written over a horizontal line.

Robert K. Villa
Chief Judge

In The Sixteenth Judicial Circuit
General Order 26-09
June 25, 2026



In The Matter Of
Court Facility Access, Public Demonstrations,
And Safety Guidelines Regarding Protest Activities

Whereas, the 16th Judicial Circuit recognizes and respects the constitutional rights of individuals to engage in peaceful assembly, free speech, and lawful protest; and

Whereas, the 16th Judicial Circuit has an independent obligation to ensure public safety, preserve access to court facilities, protect litigants, jurors, witnesses, attorneys, court personnel, and law enforcement officers, and maintain the orderly administration of justice; and

Whereas, the 16th Judicial Circuit finds that clear guidelines are necessary to accommodate lawful public demonstrations while ensuring that court operations are not disrupted;

Whereas, the enforcement of local, state, and federal laws is vested in those governmental agencies and officers authorized by law to exercise such authority, and no provision of this General Order (Order) shall be construed to authorize interference with, obstruction of, or assumption of those enforcement responsibilities by members of the public, demonstrators, or any person lacking legal authority;

Whereas, courthouse operations shall take priority over all protest activity.

Therefore, It Is Hereby Ordered:

Section 1: Purpose

This Order establishes guidelines for public demonstrations, vigils, assemblies, protests, and related activities concerning immigration enforcement, federal agencies, state agencies, local law enforcement agencies, or any other governmental entity occurring on or near court property.

Nothing in this Order shall be construed to prohibit lawful and peaceful expressive activity protected by the United States Constitution or the Constitution of the State of Illinois.

Section 2: Definitions

For purposes of this Order:

A. "Court Facility" means the judicial center, courthouse buildings, courtrooms, clerk offices, probation offices, jury assembly areas, secured parking areas, branch courts and all interior public and non-public court spaces.

B. "Demonstration" means any organized protest, rally, vigil, march, picket, assembly, or expressive gathering.

C. "Law Enforcement Agency" includes federal, state, county, and municipal agencies, including but not limited to ICE, CBP, FBI, DHS, U.S. Marshals Service, Illinois State Police, Sheriff's Offices, and municipal police departments.

Section 3: Designated Public Assembly Areas

To protect public access and court operations, demonstrations shall be conducted only within designated public assembly areas:

Kane County Judicial Center Assembly Zone

The public lawn area adjacent to the public sidewalk located no less than 100 feet from any Judicial Center entrance.

Kane County Courthouse Assembly Zone

The public sidewalk corridor along the perimeter of court property that does not impede pedestrian traffic, emergency vehicle access, or building ingress and egress.

Overflow Assembly Zone

Any additional area designated by the Chief Judge, Trial Court Administrator, Sheriff, or courthouse security personnel when attendance exceeds available space.

The Trial Court Administrator may establish temporary barriers or markings identifying the designated assembly areas.

Section 4: Prohibited Locations

No person shall:

1. Demonstrate inside any courthouse building.
2. Block entrances, exits, sidewalks, driveways, or ADA-accessible routes.
3. Drive erratically through parking lots or access roads serving court facilities;
4. Chase, pursue, run after, or otherwise interfere with law enforcement officers, court personnel, or vehicles entering, exiting, or operating on court property;
5. Occupy stairways, hallways, lobbies, or security screening areas.
6. Interfere with jurors, witnesses, litigants, attorneys, judges, court staff, or law enforcement personnel entering or exiting court facilities.
7. Enter secured or restricted areas without authorization.
8. Use amplified sound within 250 feet of any courtroom while court is in session.

Section 5: Peaceful Conduct Requirements

Participants shall:

1. Remain peaceful and nonviolent.
2. Follow lawful instructions issued by court security personnel and law enforcement officers.
3. Avoid conduct intended to intimidate, harass, threaten, or physically obstruct any individual.
4. Respect the rights of individuals who choose not to participate.
5. Maintain reasonable pedestrian access at all times.

Nothing herein prohibits lawful chanting, singing, distribution of literature, or display of signs within designated assembly areas.

Section 6: Vehicle Safety And Traffic Management

To protect public safety and ensure uninterrupted access to court facilities:

A. No Vehicle Blockades

No vehicle shall be parked, stopped, or positioned so as to:

1. Block courthouse entrances;
2. Obstruct emergency access routes;
3. Prevent ingress or egress to parking lots;
4. Interfere with public transportation stops or ADA access points.

B. Moving Demonstrations

Vehicle caravans, processions, or convoys shall:

1. Comply with all traffic laws;
2. Obey traffic signals and posted speed limits;
3. Maintain emergency access at all times;
4. Refrain from intentionally impeding traffic flow.

C. Horns and Sound Devices

The prolonged or repeated use of vehicle horns, whistles, sirens, loudspeakers, or other sound amplification devices intended to disrupt law enforcement activities or that otherwise interferes with peaceful and orderly court proceedings or that is perceived as intimidating, disturbing or alarming to any person seeking to enter the facilities is prohibited.

D. Passenger Safety

No person shall:

1. Ride on the exterior of a vehicle;
2. Sit on vehicle roofs, hoods, trunks, or open tailgates while the vehicle is in motion;
3. Enter or exit moving vehicles;
4. Throw objects from vehicles.

E. Parking

Participants shall park only in legally authorized public parking spaces and shall not occupy spaces reserved for:

- Judges;
- Jurors;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Emergency vehicles;
- Court employees;
- Law enforcement operations.

Section 7: Interaction With Law Enforcement

Individuals participating in demonstrations shall:

1. Remain calm and non-confrontational;
2. Follow lawful orders related to safety and access;
3. Refrain from physically interfering with any law enforcement activity;
4. Document events only from lawful public locations;
5. Respect established security perimeters.

Nothing in this Order authorizes interference with arrests, investigations, prisoner transport operations, or courthouse security functions.

Section 8: Emergency Access

At all times, a minimum unobstructed emergency access corridor shall be maintained for:

- Ambulances;
- Fire apparatus;
- Law enforcement vehicles;
- Security vehicles;
- ADA transportation services.

The Kane County Sheriff or designated security personnel may temporarily relocate individuals when necessary to preserve emergency access.

Section 9: Media And Recording

Recording and photography shall remain subject to existing Illinois Supreme Court Rules, local court rules, and courthouse regulations concerning electronic devices and courtroom proceedings.

Section 10: Enforcement

Persons who violate this Order may be:

1. Directed to relocate;
2. Removed from court property;
3. Subject to lawful citation or arrest when authorized by law;
4. Subject to contempt proceedings when conduct interferes with the administration of justice.

Section 11: Effective Date

This General Order shall take effect immediately upon entry and shall remain in effect until modified or rescinded by further order of the Court.

Entered this 25th day of June 2026, and effective immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.K. Villa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Robert K. Villa, Chief Judge