



ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2025-03

For the 9th Judicial District of Colorado

GARFIELD COUNTY – PITKIN COUNTY – RIO BLANCO COUNTY

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER REGARDING TEMPORARY EMERGENCY CLOSURES OF THE RIO BLANCO COUNTY COURTHOUSE (MEEKER) AND AUTHORIZING VIRTUAL APPEARANCES FOR ALL RIO BLANCO CASES AND AUTHORIZING ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR AFFECTED PERSONNEL

Effective: August 8, 2025

PURPOSE: This Administrative Order is issued to address the ongoing emergency situation in Rio Blanco County relating to the Lee and Elk Fires and to regulate courthouse closures and procedures to ensure the safety of all judicial personnel as a result of such fires. The order also authorizes administrative leave for affected personnel

LEGAL AUTHORITIES: Pursuant to Chief Justice Directive 95-01, the chief judge of every judicial district: “is responsible for the assignment and management of all district facilities, including, but not limited to, courtrooms, chambers, clerks’ offices, probation offices, jury rooms, office space, and public spaces of courthouses and probation offices.” “If a chief judge determines that a courthouse cannot operate regularly during the hours required by Chief Justice Directive 08-04, the chief judge may request a temporary reduction of courthouse hours. The request shall include the reason the reduction is necessary, a plan for addressing the reason for the reduction in hours, and an end date for the reduction. The chief justice must approve any temporary reduction of courthouse hours. Any reduction in hours must be posted prominently at the courthouse and on the judicial district’s webpage.”

On August 8, 2025, Governor Polis issued Executive Order D-2025-010 declaring a disaster emergency due to fire conditions on the Western Slope. Although the

Executive Order does not specifically reference Rio Blanco County, Rio Blanco County is severely affected by the Lee and Elk Fires which are burning on over 60,000 acres, are uncontained, and continuing to spread. Meeker is on pre-evacuation notice and courthouse staff have had to leave the Meeker area for safety purposes.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS ORDERED: Until further orders issue, the Rio Blanco County Courthouse in Meeker will be closed. All court appearances will be virtual unless a party has a constitutional or statutory right to an in-person proceeding and insists on exercising such right or is unwilling to waive such right. In that event, an in-person appearance will be scheduled either in the Rifle Associate Courthouse or the Glenwood Springs Courthouse as time and courtroom availability permit. Probation proceedings will be handled by the Probation Department and Probation staff as they direct.

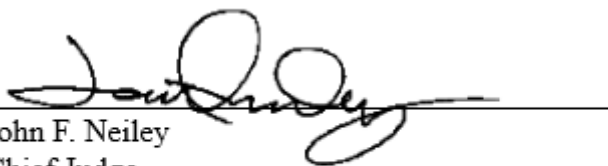
Attorneys and litigants with cases in the Rio Blanco County County Court in Meeker shall contact the courthouse staff at the Garfield County Associate Court in Rifle for assistance. Attorneys and litigants with cases in the Rio Blanco County District Court in Meeker shall contact the courthouse staff in Glenwood Springs at the Garfield County Courthouse. The Rangely associate courthouse is not closed.

Rio Blanco personnel will receive administrative leave for any time they are unable to perform their regular employment duties due to this emergency, subject to applicable Personnel Rules, Policies, and Procedures.

This order will remain in effect for 30 days unless sooner amended or terminated by further orders.

Dated: August 8, 2025.

BY THE COURT:


John F. Neiley
Chief Judge
Ninth Judicial District