



## Circuit Court of St. Mary's County, Maryland

JOHN HANSON BRISCOE CIRCUIT COURTHOUSE  
41605 COURT HOUSE DRIVE

MICHAEL J. STAMM  
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

POST OFFICE BOX 859  
LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND 20650

301-475-4200 EXT. \*4140

July 17, 2020

# Amendment to COVID-19 Operating Plan After June 5, 2020

## June 8, 2020 Policy

Courts have a responsibility not only to take steps to ensure the health and safety of those entering a court building for court proceedings, but also to reassure visitors that the courts are working to ensure visitors' health and safety so that they feel safe returning to the courthouse. Because of the courts' unique ability to compel participants to attend versus other entities who may open for individuals to voluntarily visit, this responsibility is even more important.

Recently after an update from the Saint Mary's County Health Department and new information concerning the possible spread of COVID-19, we were given new recommendations which will make it necessary to modify the June 8, 2020 Operating Plan. This is a result of concerns by the Health Department with the spread of COVID-19 through "Aerosols Transmission".

The COVID-19 Operating Plan after June 5, 2020 executed on June 8, 2020 will remain in full force and effect with the following amendments/modifications;

Face coverings need to be able to prevent transmissions of COVID-19. As a result, per the recommendation of the Saint Mary's County Health Department certain types of face coverings will not be appropriate to wear in the Court House. Bandana style, lower necks scarf type and shirts pulled up to cover an individual's mouth are not acceptable. Those with purge valves that do not have a filter are also not acceptable. If you are a visitor to the court house, the screeners at the front door will give you a disposable face covering to allow you to enter the building.

**A. Judges, Magistrates, Court Staff, and Other Courthouse Occupants' Health**

1. Judges, magistrates, court staff, and other occupants of the Courthouse while in non-public areas of the Courthouse are required to wear face coverings, and are required to practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time in their work areas in the non-public areas of the Courthouse, with the following exception. When in an office or sitting at a work cubicle you have the option of wearing a face covering. If anyone else enters the office or stands behind or above an occupied work cubicle you must wear a face covering.
2. Judges, magistrates, court staff, litigants and other visitors of the Courthouse will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time in each courtroom, during a court proceeding, with the below exceptions.
3. Witnesses while testifying shall not wear face covering unless excused of removal by the presiding judge or magistrate and all other parties in the case.
4. Litigants, including attorneys, are required to wear face coverings but may lower the face covering when speaking during the proceeding and once finished speaking replace it appropriately.
5. The Judge and/or Magistrate while on the Bench will wear a face covering when not speaking, but can ask the parties, and if all parties agree, not wear a face covering due to the amount of time they are required to speak during the proceeding.
6. Witnesses when they enter the witness box are to use the provided sanitizing wipes to wipe the hard surface in the box, remove their face covering and upon finishing

testimony re-wipe the witness areas throwing away the wipes in the disposal bin provided before leaving the box.

7. Public areas include all hallways, court rooms, self help center, grand jury room, jury assembly room, lobby area of the Clerk's Offices, lobby areas of justice partners located in the court house (Office of State's Attorney and Register of Wills), Law Library, public rest rooms and elevator 1 and 2.
8. Non-Public areas include all back hallways, Chambers areas, jury deliberation rooms, All Clerk offices, office of the State's Attorney, offices of the Register of Wills, elevator 3, storage areas and facility maintenance and equipment rooms.

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Michael J. Stamm

Administrative Judge for Saint  
Mary's County, Maryland