

# Circuit Court for Carroll County Resumption of Phase IV



Honorable Fred S. Hecker  
Administrative Judge



## CIRCUIT COURT RESUMPTION OF PHASE IV



In compliance with Chief Judge Barbera's Amended Administrative Order Expanding Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of the COVID-19 Emergency dated February 16, 2021, Maryland Courts will move to Phase IV on March 15, 2021.

### General Guidance

The courthouse will reopen to the public and there will be an increase in traffic within the courthouse. There will be continued use of social distancing restrictions and courtroom capacity will continue to be limited. The wearing of masks and health screening will continue to be required of everyone entering the courthouse.

The Clerk's office will be open to the public, but appointments will still be required for general services, licensing, land records, and civil marriage ceremonies. Filings that cannot be made electronically should be left in a drop box at the front (Court Street) entrance to the Courthouse Annex.

The Assignment office will continue to schedule civil and criminal dockets. Except as otherwise noted herein, all hearings, trials, and conferences will be held in person in the courthouse. Judges, magistrates, and their staff will review hearing assignments in advance and convert as necessary to remote hearing platforms, either on the Court's own initiative, or on motion of a party or counsel. If a hearing is converted to a remote platform, a Zoom for Government notice will be generated with details on how to participate remotely. Counsel should familiarize themselves and their clients with the Court's rules regarding remote hearings.

<https://www.courts.state.md.us/sites/default/files/import/legalhelp/pdfs/remotehearingsguidelitigantchecklist.pdf>

The Law library will be open to the public in a limited capacity based on social distancing guidelines.

The Family Law Clinic will remain closed for in-person meetings during this phase but will continue to operate remotely with appointments.

The Carroll County Supervised Visitation Center will be open in a limited capacity based on social distancing guidelines.

## Criminal Matters

- Criminal dockets will proceed as scheduled in person, unless the court orders a case to be heard remotely.
- Criminal Scheduling Conferences will resume in person primarily set on Mondays at 1:30 p.m.
- Non-Jury trials will be set during this phase.
- Writs will issue for defendants incarcerated at DOC or other local detention centers to appear in person unless the defendant consents at least 10 days in advance of the court date to appear remotely and the court directs that the defendant appear remotely.
- Criminal Pretrial Conferences and Criminal Status Conferences will continue to be held by telephone.

## Family Matters

- Trials and hearings before judges and magistrates, will be in-person unless the assigned judge or magistrate converts all or part of it to a remote hearing.
- Mediations will continue to be held primarily remotely for the time being, as arranged by the parties.
- Uncontested divorce cases will continue to be heard remotely.
- Scheduling conferences will continue to be handled remotely.
- Pretrial Settlement Conferences will continue to be heard remotely.
- Requests for remote hearings in uncontested guardianship cases will continue to be liberally granted.

## Civil Matters

- All motions, administrative appeals, district court appeals, and other civil matters will remain on the dockets as scheduled and will be in-person unless the assigned judge or magistrate converts all or part of it to a remote hearing on the court's own motion or on motion of a party or counsel.
- All bench trials will proceed as scheduled and will be in-person unless the assigned judge or magistrate converts all or part of it to a remote hearing.
- Pretrial Settlement Conferences will continue to be held remotely.

## Juvenile Matters

- Delinquency dockets before the magistrate will be handled in person, unless directed by the magistrate or a judge to be remote or hybrid as is appropriate for the particular case and judicial officer.

## CINA Matters

- All cases will be presumed to be heard remotely until further notice, subject as always to an advance request for hybrid or in person hearing. Please provide details in your request for the judicial officer's consideration.
- TPR hearings will be scheduled and may be remote, hybrid or in person as is appropriate for the particular case and judicial office. Please contact your assigned judge or magistrate in advance for instructions.

## Child Support Matters

- Establishment cases will resume on March 15, 2021 in person unless the assigned judge or magistrate converts all or part of it to a remote hearing on the court's own motion or on motion of a party or counsel.
- DNA testing will resume in April 2021.
- Contempt hearings will resume on April 23, 2021.