

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Pursuant to the Amended Seventh Administrative Order of Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera of the Court of Appeals of Maryland dated December 22, 2020, the Circuit Court for Washington County, Maryland, shall enter Phase IV of Covid-19 Emergency Operations on March 15, 2021, and Phase V on April 26, 2021.

During Phase IV, this Court will resume non-jury trials and contested hearings in Civil, Family and Juvenile matters, with limited in-person services with the Court utilizing remote proceedings, either telephonically or through Zoom for Government, whenever feasible for safety purposes.

It is recommended that individuals arrive no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their scheduled hearing time and that the number of people brought with the party is kept to a minimum as there is limited Courtroom and waiting area capacities to promote social distancing.

A screening process will be in place for entry to the Court House for all members of the public, as well as Court House staff. Individuals may be denied access to the Court House if they do not meet the health screening guidelines or if they refuse to participate in the screening process.

The Clerk of Court's Office shall be open to the public; however, for the benefit of the public, appointments are strongly recommended for in-person visits. To make an appointment, the public shall access the Clerk's Office at telephone number (301) 790-4972. If individuals arrive without appointments, the Court

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reserves the right to limit access to the public and remove individuals from the Court House if social distancing cannot be accomplished.

All members of the public, as well as Court House staff, are ordered and directed to wear masks or cloth coverings at all times while in the Court House completely covering the individual's nose and mouth.

Signs and floor marking to ensure social distancing in the Clerk of Court areas are clearly marked and shall be heeded.

When the Court enters Phase V, Civil and Criminal jury trials shall be added to the Court's dockets. Due to social distancing protocols, only one new jury trial can begin per day. The benches in the Court Rooms and hallways have been labeled for social distancing use. No two or more individuals shall sit together on the benches unless they are members of the same family unit. In the Court Rooms, plexiglass shielding has been added for the safety of the public and Court staff. Hand sanitizing stations are available throughout the Court House, and individuals are encouraged to use hand sanitizer and thoroughly wash hands whenever possible.

So ORDERED, this 9th day of March, 2021.

Daniel P. Dwyer
Administrative Judge