



Statement from the Maryland Judiciary Concerning Guardianships of Adults and Minors

The Maryland Judiciary recognizes that the appointment of a guardian may be necessary to protect a vulnerable adult or minor during the COVID-19 emergency. With courthouses restricting operations, you may be confused about what issues the court will handle at this time. This statement is intended to clarify concerns you may have regarding these matters.

Guardianship Emergencies

Circuit Courts are hearing guardianship emergencies including petitions for emergency protective services under [Code, Estates & Trusts Art., § 13-709](#) and other matters that involve an imminent threat to the health, safety, welfare, or property of an alleged disabled person or a minor. Courts will review petitions and determine what matters can be heard in person or with remote electronic participation.

Expedited Guardianship Matters

Circuit Courts will also review matters that are not emergencies but may require expedited treatment. These include petitions for guardianship of the person of an alleged disabled person filed with a request for an expedited hearing in connection with medical treatment ([Md. Rule 10-201\(f\)](#)).

Courts will evaluate each alleged disabled person's current circumstances, risks posed if the proceeding is not expedited, and any other relevant factor. In determining when to hear a case, courts will consider what time is needed to properly serve and notify interested persons and the ability of government agencies and court-appointed investigators to perform necessary investigations. The court will also evaluate the ability of attorneys representing alleged disabled persons to access and safeguard their clients' rights to due process during the emergency period.

Court-Appointed Guardians

You must continue to perform your duties as ordered. You must file annual reports and accountings on time. If you need additional time to file a report or account, contact the court that appointed you and ask for an extension. You must get permission from the court before taking any action not authorized in the order appointing you as guardian. This includes consenting to a medical procedure that involves a substantial risk to the life of an adult under guardianship or moving that person from one class of facility to another (for example, from an adult foster care home to a nursing home).

You should also notify the court of any major changes. Notify the court of significant changes in the disabled person or minor's health or living conditions. Also, notify the court if you are not able perform your duties for health or other reasons.

For more information, see the [Maryland Judiciary's Guidance for Court-Appointed Guardians of the Person and Property](#).

Maryland Self-Help Centers

To talk to a lawyer about your guardianship matter, call 410-260-1392 from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., or speak to one by chat from 8:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. at mdcourts.gov/selfhelp/mcshc.