



Lisa A. Hall Johnson
Administrative Judge

DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND
Fifth District

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April 3, 2020

Open Letter to Members of the Bar Regarding Remote Hearings for Bail Review

Beginning April 6, 2020, the Prince George's County District Court will begin to use Zoom to conduct remote bail review hearings. This does not alter the limitations outlined in the Administrative Order Extending the Length of Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operations Due to the COVID-19 Emergency issued by the Court of Appeals on March 25, 2020. However, given the increase in the COVID-19 cases in our jurisdiction, and the anticipated surge, I believe it is essential for the health and safety of members of the bar and of courthouse staff to decrease the number of people coming into the Upper Marlboro Courthouse. Our intention is to allow any member of the bar who is representing a defendant in a courtroom 261 matter to participate, have access to all of the necessary documentation to be prepared, and to promote the social distancing that is necessary to keep us all safe.

While we have allowed some flexibility in the last few weeks, in order to successfully coordinate these remote hearings, District Court dockets need to begin at a consistent time each day. As a result, beginning on April 6, 2020, District Court 261 Dockets will begin at 1:15 pm. We will handle jail cases first, beginning with bail reviews and any other matter that involves an incarcerated individual, and then the remaining matters will be addressed. This will allow the jail to exit the conference once jail matters have concluded.

I will provide detailed instructions regarding how to join the remote hearings. I will also describe the process regarding how the paperwork will be provided directly to the Office of the Public Defender, the Office of the State's Attorney, and members of the private bar.

We thank you for your patience as we navigate these difficult times. Our hope is that these remote hearings will allow effective representation of the interests of the defense and the State, while ensuring that all of us remain safe and healthy.

Regards,


Lisa A. Hall Johnson