

Proposed Reopening Plan for the Somerset County District Court--June 2020

This plan encompasses the first 2 weeks of reopening--- June 8th -June 19th.

- Our courtroom and lobby have been marked with blue tape to show where defendants may sit or stand to adhere to social guidelines.
- Anyone seeking entry to the court will be required to be screened and to have a face covering.
- We will have hand sanitizer available in several locations throughout the building, along with disinfectant spray cleaner and towels to wipe courtroom tables between cases. Trashcans to dispose of used towels will be available at each table in the courtroom.
- Bailiffs will be provided with a copy of each day's docket, so they may advise people attempting to enter the building if they have a case scheduled.

We will hear backlogged Domestic Violence Protective Orders and Peace Orders the first 2 days we are open. We will only allow 1 case in the courtroom at a time- as one case leaves, parties for the next case may enter. Bailiffs will control entry of the parties.

Dockets will be reduced by 50%.

We will hear criminal cases for incarcerated defendants during the 1st week.

Preliminary hearings, preliminary inquiries, traffic waiver hearings for payable traffic, civil affidavit judgment hearings and emergency landlord/tenant issues will be heard while adhering to CDC guidelines for social distancing, number of people in the courtroom and wearing of face coverings/masks.

Bond reviews and PI's for incarcerated individuals will continue to be heard by video. ECI cases (cases against inmates) will be heard by video if a plea is entered. The Public Defender will be coordinating this.

The State's Attorney and Public Defender have developed a plan to screen defendants for criminal and must appear traffic cases in the outer lobby of the

building, before accessing the District Court area of the building. The State and Defense will each have a table set up on opposite sides of the outer lobby before court which will be clearly marked as to who is at each station. Defendants and witnesses will be advised whether they are needed for that day. If they are needed they will be instructed to wait either outside under the building canopy or in their cars and will be called or signaled when they are needed by either the State's Attorney, Public Defender or a bailiff.

The Public Defender will be e-filing plea waiver of rights forms filled out during court so that the forms will not have to be passed back and forth between clerks, bailiffs and defendants.