

## **PROPOSED PLAN FOR WORCESTER COUNTY - 2020**

1. The District Courts in Snow Hill and Ocean City will be operating in the following manner from the date of June 8th through the date of July 19, 2020:

- No trials will be held before July 20, 2020
- No victims or witnesses will be needed before July 20, 2020 except for law enforcement witnesses testifying during preliminary hearings
- Cases will be scheduled on each docket at 50% of normal capacity
- Prosecutors will call cases in smaller groups, based on first letter of a defendant's last name (e.g. calling cases A — J) and remaining defendants and counsel will stay in hall of courthouse instead of in courtroom
- Attorneys of incarcerated defendants will be allowed to conduct remote hearings via Skype and video bail review system at the local jail
- Upon request of defense counsel, the Court will consider allowing defendants to appear via skype alongside counsel for proceedings scheduled before July 20, 2020
- Prosecutors and any law enforcement witnesses will be physically present in the courtroom for all proceedings
- Defense counsel will be allowed to accept a stet on behalf of a defendant without the defendant's remote or in-person appearance
- No incarcerated defendants will be transported to the Court for any hearing until July 20, 2020 at the earliest

2. Court will automatically schedule the following case types on dockets between the dates of June 8 and July 19, 2020:

- Preliminary Hearings
- Preliminary Inquiries for Advice of Rights and Election of Court or Jury Trial
- Hearings on Petitions for Expungement
- Payable citations scheduled for waiver hearings on the disposition docket

3. Court will schedule the following case types on dockets between the dates of June 8 and July 19, 2020 as notified by the State or by joint request of the parties:

- Plea Hearings where no active jail time is recommended or expected by the State
- VOP hearings where the Agent's recommendation is to close case with no active jail time and State does not oppose recommendation
- Any cases meeting these criteria that can be advanced to be heard before July 19, 2020 will be done at joint request of parties or at request of Parole and Probation
- Cases as described above will remain on the Court's docket on their originally-scheduled date even if the plea offer has not yet been accepted by the defendant. The plea offer will remain open on the trial date, so the plea can be executed even if defense counsel is unable to convey the offer prior to the trial date
- State will provide lists to the Court/Clerk of all cases meeting the above-listed criteria for plea hearings and VOP hearings that can be scheduled on dockets between June 8th and July 19, 2020 as plea offers are made and on an ongoing basis

- Court will administratively postpone all other matters currently scheduled between the dates of June 8 and July 19, 2020 to a date after July 19, 2020

We are taking the following steps leading up to June 8, 2020:

- The State is making a written plea offer to every represented Defendant in criminal cases and must appear traffic matters, after consultation with the victim and law enforcement, to the extent possible. We are working to make an offer at least 2 weeks prior to the current scheduled trial date.
- The State is extending the deadline for due date of community service verification to 6 months from the date of the agreement for all cases affected by the COVID-19 restrictions from March 16, 2020 through October 5, 2020.
- The State is processing expungement petitions and requesting hearings as necessary, which can be conducted without the necessity of witnesses. The State is coordinating with Parole and Probation to identify VOP hearings where the Agent's recommendation is to close the case without imposing incarceration and the State is not opposed, which can be scheduled/advanced to a date before July 20, 2020.

The State is appearing and making plea offers at bond reviews for cases when appropriate.

The State has coordinated with Warden Bounds to address and resolve cases for defendants incarcerated on district court charges, when possible and appropriate.

The State is reviewing all must appear non-DUI traffic cases and resolving appropriate cases by filing lines to nolle prosequere citations and having related minor citations scheduled for trial/paid out by Defendant.