

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR HOWARD COUNTY
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2021-03
COURTHOUSE ACCESS AND RESTRICTIONS

Pursuant to Third Amended Administrative Order Expanding Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of COVID-19 Emergency, Section, dated August 6, 2021, issued by the Honorable Mary Ellen Barbera, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Maryland, the Circuit Court for Howard County shall re-establish the following procedures, **effective August 10, 2021**:

(a) Masks shall be worn at all times, including during in-person court proceedings, except as noted in Sections (e), (f), and (g) of this Order, by all Judges, Magistrates and all personnel working in the Courthouse (regardless of entity) and any other person over the age of two (2) years entering the Courthouse, with masks to cover the nose, mouth, and chin completely, without vents.

(b) In instances in which members of the public or personnel arrive at the Courthouse without such a mask, they shall be provided with a disposable mask, if available, or given alternative means for remote access, if appropriate and possible.

(c) Barriers, including clear personal barrier shields, are not a substitute for and shall not fulfill the masking requirement in Section (a) of this Order.

(d) Social distancing of six feet or more for all persons shall be maintained throughout the Courthouse, including offices and courtrooms, but will not be a substitute for the masking requirement.

(e) With appropriate social distancing, masks may be lowered to eat, drink, or take oral or nasal medications, but shall be replaced upon completion.

(f) Throughout courtroom proceedings, all participants shall wear masks as required in Section (a) of this Order except, for good cause shown, the presiding Judge or Magistrate may require any participant to use a disposable mask, a clear mask, or wear a personal barrier shield in lieu of a mask for a limited duration to ensure that the participant can be heard or observed, with due consideration given to social distancing and other public health guidelines.

(g) Staff assigned to single-occupancy fully enclosed offices, masks may be lowered when the occupant is alone and the door is closed; however, masks shall be worn as described in Section (a) of this Order when any other person enters the office or the occupant leaves the office.

(h) Staff assigned to common area workspaces, including cubicles, shall wear masks as described in Section (a) of this Order.

(i) Any person who does not comply with this Order shall be subject to removal from the Courthouse and disciplinary action as appropriate; and

We will continue in Phase V of courthouse operations and therefore will hear/process all circuit court matters, including criminal and civil jury trials. Additionally, at this time, we will not be adjusting case processing and in-person or remote dockets. However, to achieve social distancing for large congregate settings, the Administrative Judge may limit, temporarily, the number of people entering the courthouse to the extent necessary to achieve the requirements of social distancing.

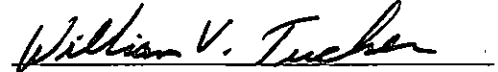
Judges, Magistrates and the Sheriff's Department are directed to enforce masking and social distancing requirements, as well as courtroom capacity restrictions. They may require witnesses and/or observer seating to be limited with such persons rotated in and out of courtrooms or having access by alternate arrangements.

Judges and Magistrates are directed to inform all persons entering courtrooms that masking and social distancing are required for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status.

The court shall continue to be open to the public, and no appointment shall be necessary for access; however, individuals seeking access to the courtrooms and other court spaces may be limited on an intermittent basis. Additionally, no modifications to the physical arrangement in courtrooms may be made without approval of the Court Administrator and Administrative Judge.

SO ORDERED:

August 10, 2021



William V. Tucker
County Administrative Judge

ENTERED

AUG 10 2021

**CLERK, CIRCUIT COURT
HOWARD COUNTY**