

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 15 (2021)
GOVERNING COURTHOUSE ACCESS AND RESTRICTIONS
DURING THE RETURN TO PHASE IV
OF THE COVID-19 REOPENING PLAN

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KENT COUNTY

WHEREAS, a public health emergency continues to exist due to the outbreak of the “coronavirus pandemic” which requires continuing adjustment of measures to reduce the risk of exposure for individuals entering the courthouse;

WHEREAS, the most recent Administrative Order of Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera has returned all courts in Maryland to Phase IV of the Reopening Plan as of March 15, 2021, pending further Order by the Chief Judge; and

WHEREAS, the guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control, the Maryland Department of Health, and local health agencies, will continue to be utilized;

WHEREAS, courthouse security personnel are authorized to screen those persons permitted to enter the courthouse and to refuse entry for persons in various circumstances; and

WHEREAS, courthouse security personnel have been conducting thermal temperature checks for individuals entering the courthouse; and

WHEREAS, in light of the phased Reopening Plan, expanded health and safety measures are required to limit exposure and to prevent the spread of COVID-19, in order to ensure the safety and well-being of courthouse employees, counsel, litigants and the public who enter the courthouse;

NOW THEREFORE, it is ORDERED as follows:

Courthouse Admission

During the return to Phase IV, the courthouse will remain open to the public with certain restrictions, as listed herein. There will continue to be in-person court proceedings as well as access to the clerks' offices.

Courthouse entry during this Phase is limited to courthouse employees; those with offices within the courthouse; counsel, parties and necessary witnesses appearing for a case scheduled to be held in-person; members of the public with a limitation on the overall number permitted in various areas within the courthouse; credentialed members of the press appearing for a matter scheduled on the court docket; and others approved as appropriate by the Administrative Judge.

During Phase IV, filings that are not made electronically or left in the drop box at the entrance to the courthouse may be made in-person for purposes as listed in the Exhibit to the Administrative Order Restricting Statewide Judiciary Operation and otherwise as subject to the other restrictions outlined herein;

During Phase IV the building will continue to receive an additional cleaning from 12:00PM to 1:00PM, but will remain open to the public during this time.

Required Health Screening Upon Entry

Courthouse security personnel shall continue to employ heightened courthouse entry screenings as follows:

- All persons entering the building are required to respond to health screening questions;
- All persons entering the building are subject to a touchless thermal temperature check with available equipment. Any person who has an elevated temperature of

100.3 degrees Fahrenheit or greater shall be refused entry into the courthouse;

- All persons over the age of three entering the courthouse shall wear a face mask or other covering over their nose and mouth ("face covering"). A face covering must be worn continuously by any person in a public area within the courthouse. This requirement extends to appearances in courtrooms, except when speaking at the discretion of the Judge;
- Any person who is refused entry based upon any health screening criteria, and who is scheduled to appear as counsel, a party, or a witness in a scheduled proceeding, will be provided with a notice and instructions about who to contact;
- Courthouse security personnel shall deny entry to the courthouse to any person who refuses to comply with the screening process, or who refuses to wear a face covering.

Courtrooms and Other Public Areas

- Not counting staff and attorneys, a maximum of 10 people will be permitted in the Circuit Court courtroom;
- Not counting staff and attorneys, a maximum of 8 people will be permitted in the District Court courtroom;
- Not counting staff, 1 person will be permitted in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court;
- Not counting staff, 1 person will be permitted in the Clerk's Office of the District Court;
- Not counting staff, 1 person will be permitted in the Register of Wills Office;

- The Family Law Clinic on Tuesdays will be open, subject to further order of this Court, and permitted to have 1 person at a time;
- These limits will be enforced by judicial officers or security staff;
- Social distancing markers will be placed throughout the courthouse to assist with and reinforce social distancing requirements;
- Any person who refuses to comply with social distancing requirements is subject to removal from the courthouse by courthouse security.

Inmate Transportation and Care

- An inmate may not be transported to the courthouse if the inmate: (1) is in quarantine for COVID-19 within a prison or detention facility; (2) tests positive for COVID-19; (3) exhibits signs of illness; or (4) has a temperature greater than 100.3 degrees Fahrenheit;
- All inmates transported to the courthouse are subject to temperature screening by a touchless thermometer;
- Inmates shall wear face coverings during transport and while in the courthouse;
- Inmates will be housed in lockups with proper social distancing, to the extent possible.


Courthouse Staff Obligations

- Court staff experiencing any sign or symptom of illness must stay home from work;
- Court staff must employ proper social distancing;
- Court staff must wear face coverings in a manner consistent with this Administrative Order;

COVID-19 Positive Testing Reporting Requirements

- Any employee who tests positive for COVID-19, or who has been advised by medical personnel that he or she is presumptively positive, shall self-report immediately to his or her Administrative Head, self-quarantine, and not return to the courthouse until cleared by his or her Administrative Head;
- Except as permitted by the most recent guidance of the CDC and state and local health departments, any employee who has been in contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, or who has been advised by medical personnel that he or she is presumptively positive, shall quarantine for 10 days or as otherwise directed by a County Health Officer.

3/14/21
Date



Administrative Judge