



**The Second Judicial Circuit of Maryland
Circuit Court for Cecil County**

KEITH A. BAYNES
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

COURTHOUSE
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**CIRCUIT COURT FOR CECIL COUNTY
COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN**

Courts have a responsibility not only to take steps to ensure the health and safety of those entering a court building for court proceedings, but also to reassure visitors that the courts are working to ensure visitors' health and safety so that they feel safe returning to the courthouse. Because of the courts' unique ability to compel participants to attend versus other entities who may open for individuals to voluntarily visit, this responsibility is even more important.

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, magistrates and other individuals entering the courthouse building, the Circuit Court for Cecil County will implement the following protective measures effective as of June 22, 2020:

General

1. Subject to the exceptions and limitations set forth below, the Circuit Court for Cecil County (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the Courthouse) shall remain closed to the public until July 20, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. Even while Courthouse is closed to the public, however, Judges, Magistrates, and essential court personnel shall be available during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) in a manner necessary to effectuate the mission of the Court, which may include being electronically or telephonically accessible.
2. Individuals who show symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been exposed to someone with the symptoms of COVID-19 may not enter the Courthouse.
3. The Court shall continue to accept filings and shall be available to answer telephone calls, emails, and other communications. Individuals who do not have access to MDEC e-filing may file documents by mail or via the Courthouse drop-box. In person filings will be available beginning July 20, 2020. If a person wishes to file a document and is

unsure of the filing method, the individual should contact the Clerk's office by telephone to get instructions for filing at 410-996-1021.

4. All judges and magistrate will comply with the Covid-19 Emergency Orders issued by the Court of Appeals of Maryland, including conducting in-person proceedings according to the guidance issued by the Court of Appeals, Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Governor of Maryland regarding social distancing, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions.
5. The Court will not permit any in-person proceeding contrary to guidance issued by the Court of Appeals, Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Governor of Maryland regarding social distancing, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions.
6. All judges and magistrate will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
7. Jury trials will not resume until October 5, 2020.
8. The Administrative Judge of this Court, or his designee, will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and other state and local agencies and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in Cecil County.

Judges, Magistrate, Court Staff, and Other Courthouse Occupants' Health

1. Judges, magistrate and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible, as permitted by the Court Administrator or the Administrative Judge.
2. Judges, magistrate, court staff, and other occupants of the Courthouse who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.4°F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 will not be permitted to enter the building and should seek medical advice.
3. Judges, magistrate, court staff, and other occupants of the Courthouse will be required to wear face coverings while in the presence of other staff or occupants, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times, unless excused by the presiding judge or magistrate during a court proceeding.

Court Dockets and Scheduling

1. Court dockets and schedules will be set to reduce occupancy in the Courthouse.
2. The Court and court staff will use good-faith efforts to ensure that:
 - a. No more than 10 persons are gathered in the courtroom or in areas around the courtroom (see exception below);
 - b. Participants wear face coverings where possible; and

- c. Participants in the courtroom are separated consistent with social distancing and other precautions.
3. EXCEPTION: Court proceedings may occur in person in excess of the 10-person maximum if the law or proceeding requires more than 10 persons. Every effort will be made to ensure that participants will be separated consistent with social distancing and should wear face coverings where possible.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations.
2. A notice will be posted on the court's websites notifying individuals who are in vulnerable populations of the ability to contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations.
3. The Court will make efforts to provide reasonable accommodations to vulnerable populations who are required to come to court.

Children

1. Visitors are encouraged not to bring children under the age of 16 into the Courthouse. As with adults, children with COVID-19 may only have mild symptoms, but they can still pass this virus onto others who may be at higher risk. If a visitor must bring children to the Courthouse, children 2 years and older should wear a cloth face mask that covers their nose and mouth.

Social Distancing

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the Courthouse will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.
2. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in an elevator. If more than one individual from the same household is in an elevator, no other individuals will be permitted in the elevator.

Gallery

3. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court bailiffs.

Well

4. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk's bench, and bailiff seating have been arranged in such a way so that, to the extent possible, there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the Courthouse.
2. Bathrooms will be checked regularly to ensure that adequate soap is on hand to facilitate frequent hand washing.
3. The Maryland Department of Health's "Covid-19 Prevention Tips" Notice has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the Courthouse.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the Courthouse, individuals will be asked health screening questions. Individuals who indicate yes to any of these questions and/or have a temperature equal to or exceeding 100.4°F will be refused admittance to the Courthouse and will be given information on who they should contact. Security or medical staff will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual.
2. Inmates being transported from the jail to the Courthouse will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperature taken prior to transport. Inmates with symptoms or a temperature equal to or above 100.4°F will not be transported to the Courthouse.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the Courthouse and when in the presence of other staff or occupants, will be required to wear face coverings unless excused by the Administrative Judge, or by a presiding judge or magistrate during a court proceeding.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided by the court as supplies allow.

Cleaning

1. Court staff and building cleaning staff will disinfect the common areas of the court buildings so that the common spaces, particularly door handles, door knobs, stair rails, elevator buttons, light switches, and other surfaces commonly touched several times a day, are disinfected. Court staff shall disinfect these surfaces at regular intervals throughout the day. At the end of each day, the building cleaning staff will perform a thorough cleaning and disinfection of both courthouses, including common spaces, bathrooms, and courtrooms that have been used.

2. Courthouse cleaning staff have provided assurance that the cleaning supplies are shown to be effective against coronavirus.
3. Courthouse cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

6-8-2020

DATE



Keith A. Baynes
Administrative Judge