



# Maryland Judiciary's Guidance for Court-Appointed Guardians of the Person and Property

The Maryland Judiciary understands this may be a confusing time for court-appointed guardians. This document is intended to address concerns you may have about caring for the person under guardianship during the COVID-19 emergency.

The courts are monitoring the personal and financial well-being of adults and minors under guardianship. As a court-appointed guardian, you are still expected to fulfill your responsibilities to the person under guardianship and the court. Here are some tips to help you navigate this difficult time:

- **Continue to perform your duties as ordered.** File annual reports of the guardian of the person, inventories, Fiduciary's Accounts, and proof of bond on time. If you need more time, ask for an extension. Get permission from the court before taking any action not authorized in the order. This includes consenting to a medical procedure that involves a substantial risk to the life of a disabled person or moving that person from one class of facility to another (for example, from an adult foster care home to a nursing home).
- **Notify the court of any major changes.** Contact the court if there is a significant change to the person under guardianship's health or living conditions. Notify the court if you are not able to perform your duties. There may come a time when you need to self-quarantine, become ill, or your need to care for another person interferes with your ability to care for the person under guardianship. Notify the court so it can take steps to protect the person under guardianship.
- **Monitor and takes steps to protect the person under guardianship.** If the person does not live with you, monitor his or her care as frequently. If the person is in a nursing home, assisted living, residential treatment, or hospice facility, you may not be able to visit with him or her during the pandemic.

**Keep in touch.** The person under guardianship may feel more anxious and isolated. If you cannot visit with him or her, stay in regular contact by phone, text, email, or video chat. Talk to facility staff about arranging for this contact and ways to support and comfort the person.

**Keep others safe.** If you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or were around someone who does, avoid in person contact with the person under guardianship and others.

**Keep in contact with facility staff.** This includes doctors, nurses, social workers, and aides who have direct access to the person under guardianship. Ask for regular updates about the person or to review records that are available electronically. Keep those records confidential.

**Keep alert.** Ask how the facility is preventing or controlling COVID-19 and maintaining social distancing. Ask for documentation on plans and protocols. Under an [April 24, 2020 Executive Order](#), these facilities must, among other things, evaluate each resident for COVID-19 symptoms daily and provide regular updates to residents and resident's representatives (including guardians). Make sure you get these updates.

If you believe the person under guardianship is not receiving necessary care or services, unsafe, or being abused or neglected, contact **Adult Protective Services at 1-800-332-6347**. If the person is a resident of a nursing home, board and care home, or assistant living facility, you can also contact the [local Long-Term Care Ombudsman](#). For a phone list, visit <https://aging.maryland.gov/Documents/OmbudsmanLocation.pdf>.

- **Remember that the court is your partner.** If you have questions about your responsibilities, contact the court that appointed you. The courts recognize that the COVID-19 emergency may make it difficult to perform your duties, access services, apply for benefits, or collect supporting documentation for accounts. **Remember** to keep good records and let the court know if you encounter barriers.

**Helpful resources:**

- **Find your court:** <https://www.mdcourts.gov/circuit>
- **Guardianship court forms:** <https://www.mdcourts.gov/family/guardianship-forms>
- **Maryland Self-Help Centers:** To talk to a lawyer about a guardianship legal matter, call 410-260-1392 from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., or speak to one by chat from 8:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. at [mdcourts.gov/selfhelp/mcshc](http://mdcourts.gov/selfhelp/mcshc).
- **COVID-19 resources:**
  - Maryland Judiciary COVID-19 Updates: [www.mdcourts.gov/coronavirusupdate](http://www.mdcourts.gov/coronavirusupdate)
  - Governor Larry Hogan's COVID-19 site: [governor.maryland.gov/coronavirus/](http://governor.maryland.gov/coronavirus/)
  - Maryland Department of Health COVID-19 Information Portal: [health.maryland.gov/pages/home.aspx](http://health.maryland.gov/pages/home.aspx)
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- **Maryland Access Point (MAP):** To find services and support for older adults and persons with disabilities visit [marylandaccesspoint.info](http://marylandaccesspoint.info) or call 1-844-627-5465.
- **Maryland 2-1-1:** For help accessing health and human services information dial 2-1-1 or visit <https://211md.org/>.