
CIRCUIT COURT FOR BALTIMORE CITY
CRIMINAL DIVISION

Differentiated Case Management Plan

First Edition: August 2016
Revised for Approval: February 4, 2019

Criminal Differentiated Case Management Plan

This Criminal DCM Plan is established in accordance with Rule 16-302(b) which requires the County Administrative Judge to develop and, upon approval by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, implement and monitor a case management plan for the prompt and efficient scheduling and disposition of actions in the Circuit Court.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Criminal DCM Plan is to provide a structured system for the timely and efficient management of cases. The Circuit Court for Baltimore City acknowledges its responsibility for managing case progress. From the commencement of litigation to its resolution, whether by trial or other disposition, any elapsed time other than reasonably required for pleadings, discovery, and court events, is unacceptable and should be eliminated. To enable just and efficient resolution of cases, the Court will control the pace of litigation. A strong judicial commitment is essential to reducing delay and once achieved, maintaining a current docket.

The objectives of the Criminal DCM Plan include:

1. Firm and credible case assignment and scheduling of events;
2. Expedited case disposition for incarcerated defendants;
3. Judicial supervision consistent with the complexity of each case; and
4. Effective and efficient use of judicial resources.

Further, consistent with case time standards adopted by the Judicial Council, constitutional requirements and applicable court rules, it is the goal of the Plan to comply with accepted time standards, to wit: 98% of all cases shall be completed within 180 days of the defendant's first appearance in the Circuit Court or the entry of appearance by counsel, whichever is earlier. In order to achieve this goal, this Court is also committed to resolving different categories of cases within a regular and predictable time frame warranted by the needs of those cases.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The policies and procedures outlined in this plan shall be implemented by the Judge-In-Charge of the Criminal Docket (JICCr). The JICCr shall exercise and have authority over such criminal issues and matters as designated by the administrative judge pursuant to Rule 16-202(b). The JICCr shall monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Criminal DCM Plan with the assistance of the Associate Administrator and Research Analyst. Any issues with the Plan will be discussed at the monthly case management meetings¹ chaired by the JICCr.

All judges and staff are responsible for compliance with the Plan and the effective management of cases assigned to them, including adherence to the case time standards.

Under the supervision of the JICCr, the criminal analyst prepares regular reports which measure case processing performance and provide overview of how court resources are utilized. These reports are crucial to the success of the Criminal DCM Plan. The reports include the following:

¹ These meetings are attended by members of the Clerk's Office, State's Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, members of the private criminal defense bar, Criminal Assignment and Pretrial Release Services.

1. Daily - Trial Calendar - details the availability of trial courts for trial and disposition of cases;
2. Weekly – Priority Felony Trials – sets out list of oldest cases set for trial during week – places all parties on notice that such cases should be resolved on the trial date;
3. Weekly – Reception and Initial Appearance Workloads – projects number of cases set in reception courts – permits JICCr to monitor any spikes or dips in case assignment;
4. Monthly – List of all defendants incarcerated over one year pending trial – permits JICCr to monitor closely the progress of priority cases;
5. Monthly - Summary of all cases within and outside of case time standards – permits JICCr to monitor closely the case management performance and success of the DCM Plan;
6. Monthly – Summary of total disposition of cases – permits JICCr to monitor trends in case outcomes;
7. Monthly – Summary of postponements granted and reasons for postponements – permits JICCr to monitor any postponement trends;
8. Monthly – Summary of total number of incarcerated defendants pending trial – permits JICCr to determine if the Court’s resources are being used to resolve the most serious cases; and
9. Monthly – Summary of pending cases – permits JICCr to monitor if the total misdemeanor and felony case load is increasing or decreasing.

Criminal Clerk’s Office

Under authority of the Clerk for the Circuit Court, the Criminal Division of the Clerk’s Office processes and maintains all case information. The Criminal Clerk’s Office also issues all notices/summons/writs for all case hearings and trials. Although this is a very short summary of the enormous effort expended by the Clerk’s Office, the Clerk’s Office duties are critical to the success of the Criminal DCM Plan.

Criminal Assignment Office

The Criminal Assignment Office (CAO) operates under the authority of the Clerk for the Circuit Court. The CAO schedules all initial appearances, hearings and trials and the postponement of such case events in accordance with the case time standards. The CAO is also crucial to the success of the Criminal DCM Plan.

TRACK DESIGNATIONS

All criminal cases follow one of four distinct tracks to resolution. Tracks are based on the expected complexity of the case.

Track A – Simple Cases

All jury trial prayers and appeals from the District Court will be assigned to Track A by the Clerk’s Office.

When a jury trial is prayed in District Court, the District Court assigns a trial date within 21 to 24 days after the jury trial is prayed. Criminal Track A - Jury Trial Prayers have a disposition² goal of 90 days.

All misdemeanors received from the District Court after appeal are assigned a trial date within 30 to 45 days after the appeal is filed. Criminal Track A - District Court Appeals also have a disposition goal of 90 days.

Track B - Regular Cases

Cases involving non-violent crimes³ are assigned to Track B by the State's Attorney Office (SAO) upon the filing of an indictment or information with the Clerk's Office. Criminal Track B cases will receive a trial date within 60 to 75 days of the initial appearance date. Criminal Track B – Regular Cases have a disposition goal of 120 days.

Track C – Serious Cases

Cases involving violent crimes are assigned to Track C by the SAO upon the filing of an indictment or information with the Clerk's Office. Criminal Track C cases will receive a trial date within 90 to 105 days of the initial appearance date. Criminal Track C – Serious Cases have a disposition goal of 150 days.

Track D – Complex Cases

Cases involving a homicide, multiple victims and/or multiple defendants are assigned to Track D by the SAO. Criminal Track D cases will receive a trial date within 120 to 135 days of the initial appearance date. Criminal Track D – Complex Cases have a disposition goal of 180 days.

Table 1.1 – Criminal Tracks

<i>Track</i>	<i>Case types</i>	<i>Expected Case Duration and Notes</i>
Track A Simple Cases	Jury trial prayers from District Court, District Court Appeals	90 days to disposition.
Track B Regular Cases	Non-violent felony charge(s)	120 days to disposition. Cases downgraded to a misdemeanor remain Track B.

² “Disposition” means dismissal, stet, or guilty finding.

³ Depending on its complexity, any case may be upgraded for a more realistic disposition goal.

<i>Track</i>	<i>Case types</i>	<i>Expected Case Duration and Notes</i>
Track C Serious Cases	Violent felony charge(s)	150 days to disposition. Cases upgraded to a multi-victim/defendant or homicide charge will be changed to Track D.
Track D Complex Cases	Homicide charge(s), multiple victims, multiple defendants.	180 days to disposition.

CASE EVENTS AND PROCEDURES

Circuit Court criminal cases can be initiated by the filing of a jury trial prayer/appeal from District Court, or an information or indictment. Most misdemeanor cases reach the Circuit Court after a jury trial prayer in District Court, and most felony cases are initiated by indictment. The first case event in the Circuit Court is the filing of either a jury trial prayer or an appeal in the District Court (Track A) or the filing of a criminal information or indictment in the Circuit Court (Tracks B, C, D). A charging document filed in the Circuit Court may be:

1. A District Court charging document for an offense on which the defendant demands a jury trial or appeal (Track A below);⁴
2. An indictment (see Tracks B, C and D below);
3. An information (see Tracks B, C and D below).

Table 1.2 – Criminal Case Events by Track

Track A – Simple Cases: Jury Trial Prayers and Appeals from District Court

Case Event	Timing
Case Initiation	Jury trial prayer/appeal from District Court
Initial Appearance	Not required
Discovery	See Rules 4-301(c), 4-262(i) and 4-263(h) – usually before the date of trial
Trial Date ⁵	Within 21 – 24 days of jury trial prayer Within 30 – 45 days of filing of appeal
Sentencing (if guilty)	Same day

⁴ See Rule 4-201(c)(3).

⁵ As required by Rule 4-271(a), the date for all trials is set within 30 days after the earlier of the appearance of counsel or the first appearance of the defendant before the Court.

Track B – Regular Cases: Non-Violent Felony

Case Event	Timing
Case Initiation	Filing of Information/Indictment in Circuit Court
Initial Appearance – if necessary	Within 37 days of filing of Information/Indictment in Circuit Court
Discovery	See Rule 4-263(h) – within 30 days after the earlier of appearance of counsel or the first appearance of the defendant
Trial Date	Within 60 – 75 days of the initial appearance date
Sentencing (if guilty)	Usually - Same day

Track C – Serious Cases: Violent Felony

Case Event	Timing
Case Initiation	Filing of Information/Indictment in Circuit Court
Initial Appearance – if necessary	Within 37 days of filing of Information/Indictment in Circuit Court
Discovery	See Rule 4-263(h) – within 30 days after the earlier of appearance of counsel or the first appearance of the defendant
Pre-Trial Conference	45 days before trial date
Trial Date	Within 90 – 105 days of the initial appearance date
Sentencing (if guilty)	Usually - Same day, or within 90 days if presentence investigation is ordered pursuant to Rule 4-341

Track D – Complex Cases: Homicides, Multi-victim, Multi-defendant

Case Event	Timing
Case Initiation	Filing of Information/Indictment in Circuit Court
Initial Appearance – if necessary	Within 37 days of filing of Information/Indictment in Circuit Court
Discovery	See Rule 4-263(h) – within 30 days after the earlier of appearance of counsel or the first appearance of the defendant
Pre –Trial Conference	45 days before trial
Trial Date	Within 120 and 135 days of the initial appearance date
Sentencing (if guilty)	Usually - Same day, or within 90 days if presentence investigation is ordered pursuant to Rule 4-341

Initial Appearance

No initial appearance is held for jury trial prayers or appeals from District Court. For all other cases, upon the filing of the indictment/information, the SAO provides the Clerk’s Office with the following:

- a. Case Number
- b. Proposed Initial Appearance Date: and
- c. Proposed Track for case.
- d. Three proposed trial dates.

Once the Clerk’s Office enters the case into the Court’s data management system, the CAO will set the initial appearance date and the appearance deadline/removal date for the initial appearance docket.⁶

The tracks for felonies and misdemeanors charged by indictment/information are as follows:

- i. Track B – Regular- Non-violent cases – Track B cases are given trial dates between 60 and 75 days from appearance date to comply with the 120 day time standard.
- ii. Track C – Serious – Violent cases – Track C cases are given trial dates between 90 and 105 days from appearance date to comply with the 150 day time standard.
- iii. Track D – Complex – Homicides, multi – victim, multi defendant cases – Track D cases are given trial dates between 120 and 135 days from appearance date to comply with the 180 day time standard.

⁶ The Appearance Deadline/removal Date is the day before the initial appearance.

Criminal Assignment will set equally all indictment/information cases on the proposed Initial Appearance date in Part 45 or Part 46. Initial Appearances will be held daily at 2:00 P.M. for unrepresented defendants only.

Upon accepting representation, Defense Counsel shall file with the Clerk's Office an (1) entry of appearance, AND (2) a written plea pursuant to Rule 4 – 242(b), AND (3) Defense Counsel or the State shall email a completely filled out "Criminal Trial Schedule Form" to Criminal Assignment Staff. Criminal Assignment will set the trial date in the same Reception Court Part as the Initial Appearance and send trial notices to all counsel. For Track C and D cases, a completely filled out Criminal Trial Schedule Form must include a Pre-Trial Conference date approximately 45 days before the trial date agreed to by counsel. The fillable Criminal Trial Schedule Form is posted on the Baltimore City Circuit Court website under Resources for Attorneys on the Criminal Division webpage.

If the foregoing steps are completed, defense counsel, the defendant and the State's Attorney will not be required to appear on the Initial Appearance date.

If no entry of appearance is filed by the day before the initial appearance, the Defendant must appear on the Initial Appearance date to be advised of right to counsel, charges, penalties and be assigned a trial date within the time window for the specific track assigned to the case.

Discovery

Due to the fact that cases are not assigned to a specific judge, the Court has designated a "Discovery Judge" to resolve all discovery related motions and pleadings.⁷ The Clerk's Office screens incoming pleadings for all motions and pleadings which are discovery related. The Clerk's Office will then assign a time period for the response or opposition to the motion/pleading such as:

1. 8 days for Motions to Compel (Rule 4-263(i));
2. 18 days for Motions for Sanctions (Rule 4-263(n));
3. 18 days for Motions for Protective Order (Rules 4-263(m) & 4-266(c)) and
4. 18 days for Motions for Deposition of Witness (Rule 4-261).

Once the time period for response or opposition has expired, and if it is more than 7 days before the trial date, the Clerk's Office will forward the discovery motion or pleading to the Discovery Judge for review and ruling. If it is less than 7 days before the trial date, the Clerk's Office will forward the discovery motion or pleading to the Discovery Judge as soon as possible.

If the Discovery Judge determines that a hearing is necessary, the Discovery Judge's staff will contact the Assistant State's Attorney and defense counsel to schedule a hearing date prior to the assigned trial date. If the Discovery Judge issues a protective order tying the timing of disclosures to the trial date, the Discovery Judge will order all counsel to submit a request for a specially set

⁷ For the same reason, the JICCr assigns other tasks to Judges in the Criminal Division. Such tasks include weekly bail reviews, expungements, Rule 4-264 Motions for Subpoena Before Trial, Motions to Disqualify Counsel, and rulings on bail forfeitures.

trial along with a copy of the Protective Order to the JICCr. The case will then be specially assigned on a specific date to a trial court so that the protective order can be implemented.

Scheduling – Trial Dates

All Track A cases are assigned to the misdemeanor reception court for trial. All other track cases are assigned to the felony reception court for trial, with the exception of specially set trials, described below. The parties must appear in the assigned reception court at the assigned date and time prepared to proceed to trial. Each day, cases are called by the reception court judges based on the age of the case. If a plea or other disposition of the case is not reached, or the case is not postponed for good cause, the case is forwarded to one of twelve trial courts for trial.

As noted above, the Court maintains a trial calendar which sets out the availability of the twelve trial courts and recalled judges. The trial calendar is updated on a daily basis so that the reception court judges are always aware of open trial courts.

Postponements

The Court's postponement policy is strict and consistent across all four tracks in order to comply with time standards. As required by Rule 4-271, the Court will deny requests for postponements unless "good cause" is shown. Good cause reasons are illustrated in Appendix 1, Criminal Postponement Form. Further, decisions to postpone any case except cases transferred to the Court from the District Court after a jury trial prayer are made by a judge designated by the administrative judge as required by Rule 16-101, which typically is the judge assigned to the felony reception court. All postponement decisions are memorialized on the standard postponement form which is attached.

Advance postponements are not accepted for misdemeanor jury trial prayer cases. If counsel wishes to postpone a felony case prior to the trial date, counsel shall submit by email a Request for Advance Trial Postponement Form at least 7 business days prior to the trial date to the JICCr or his/her designee. The fillable Advance Trial Postponement Form is posted on the Baltimore City Circuit Court website under Resources for Attorneys on the Criminal Division webpage.

The request should be submitted at least 4 business days prior to the selected dates for a hearing indicated on the postponement request form. The JICCr will either deny the postponement request or set a date and time to hear the postponement request.

Specially Set Cases

The Circuit Court for Baltimore City has a high volume of Track C and D – Serious and Complex Cases. Due to the nature of such cases, both the State and the defense have historically requested multiple postponements. In order to avoid such postponements and maintain these cases within time standards, the JICCr conducts pretrial conferences 45 days before the trial date. If the JICCr believes that the case should be specially set, he/she assigns a trial court upon completion of the specially set request form. Any request to postpone a priority felony trial or a case already specially set must be approved by the JICCr. Based upon the JICCr's ruling on the request, the case is sent back to the Reception Court Judge to either grant the postponement request or send the case to trial.

Counsel must jointly submit a Request for Specially Set Criminal Trial directly to the JICCr for consideration.


Specialized Courts

The Court has two specialized courts: Drug Treatment Court (DTC) and Mental Health Court (MHC). Both specialized courts are currently presided over by recalled judges.

DTC referral may be made on the Court's own initiative or by an ASA, APD, or defense counsel to the Drug Court Coordinator. Potential referrals are then screened and assessed by the offices of the State's Attorney, Public Defender, Parole and Probation and Behavioral Health System Baltimore. Defendants with pending cases or violation of probation cases are referred to the DTC after assessment for eligibility. Defendants with pending cases plead guilty in DTC and defendants with violation of probation cases will have his/her probation transferred to the DTC judge.

The MHC handles two tracks of cases: competency/NCR and treatment/probation. The MHC sits one day per week and oversees the referred cases until the NCR plea is resolved or until the defendant's competency is established. The Court may refer a defendant to the MHC for a possible plea and supervision by sending a completed referral form to the MHC.

APPENDIX 1

	Circuit Court for Baltimore City Criminal Division	<h1 style="margin: 0;">Criminal Postponement Form</h1>																																														
[PLEASE USE BLUE OR BLACK BALLPOINT PEN AND PRESS HARD TO MAKE FIVE COPIES]																																																
<input type="checkbox"/> ADVANCE REQUEST																																																
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div>Date: _____</div><div>SID # _____</div><div>Case # _____</div></div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">State vs. _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">Attorney: _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">Co-Defendant #1: _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">Attorney: _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">Co-Defendant #2: _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">Attorney: _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">ASA: _____</div>		Defendant Location JAIL <input type="checkbox"/> BAIL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <input type="checkbox"/> (Specify) _____ _____ _____																																														
<div style="margin-top: 20px;">Postponement requested by: State _____ Defendant _____ Co-Defendant #1 _____ Co-Defendant #2 _____ All _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">To be postponed from: Date _____ Part # _____ Hicks Date _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">Number of prior postponements: _____ Retrial: _____</div>																																																
REASON(S) FOR POSTPONEMENT - Please check appropriate box(es):																																																
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WAIVER OF MARYLAND RULE 4-271																																																
The above-named defendant, having been advised of the right to a prompt trial in this case, hereby waives the time requirement of Maryland Rule 4-271 which requires that (s)he be tried within 180 days of his/her first personal appearance, the appearance of counsel or waiver of counsel. The defendant understands that this or future postponement may result in a trial date beyond 180 days and hereby expressly consents thereto.																																																
Defendant: _____ Counsel: _____ Date: _____																																																
Proposed Dates _____ _____ _____ _____	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div><input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> NOT Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Valid Hicks Waiver <input type="checkbox"/> Good Cause Found</div><div>Postponement charged to: <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Defense <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative <input type="checkbox"/> No Court Available</div></div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">New Trial Date: _____ Part #: _____ Time: _____</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">Reason - Judge to select code(s) and insert here: _____</div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">Judge's signature: _____</div>																																															
Revised 5/2014 - Criminal Postponement Form Form CC-140 White - Court File Yellow - CAO Pink - SAO Gold - Defense Attorney Blue - Analyst																																																