



CIRCUIT COURT FOR HARFORD COUNTY

REVISED March 2, 2022

COVID-19 Court Re-Opening Plan—Phase V



In accordance with the Fifth Amended Administrative Order Expanding Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of the COVID-19 Emergency issued by Chief Judge Joseph M. Getty of the Court of Appeals of Maryland on March 1, 2022 (hereafter “Amended Administrative Order”), this Court will proceed to **Phase V—a fully operational reopening of the Harford County Circuit Courthouse on March 7, 2022.** See [*Fifth Amended Administrative Order Expanding Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of the COVID-19 Emergency*](#).

GENERAL

Wearing of masks is voluntary for all persons entering the Courthouse, but strongly encouraged for those who are not fully vaccinated. COVID-19 screening and temperature checks are suspended.

The following persons, however, may not enter the Courthouse:

1. Anyone with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis who remains symptomatic or within the applicable quarantine period.
2. Anyone not fully vaccinated who was exposed to a person with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis and who remains within the applicable quarantine period; and
3. Anyone who has been advised by a doctor, hospital, or local health department to self-quarantine.

The Court will be flexible with respect to social distancing in the corridors of the Courthouse. And in each courtroom or hearing room, the presiding judge or magistrate is responsible for determining appropriate social distancing and may implement any other appropriate precautions to protect against transmission of the Coronavirus in the courtroom or hearing room. This may change subject to any change in guidelines issued by the CDC, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), or recommendations of the local health officer.

CLERK’S OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE HOURS

1. The Office of the Clerk and the Courthouse will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with the entrance for the public on Courtland Street. In addition, a drop box for pleadings will be available inside the vestibule at the Courtland Street entrance.
2. Court activities shall proceed with restrictions to limit the concentration of individuals and allow social distancing, consistent with guidance of the CDC or MDH or both.
3. Visitors to the Courthouse are encouraged to not bring unvaccinated children into the Courthouse.

4. The Self-Help Center will be open from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. for pre-scheduled in-person appointments only. Telephone consultations and virtual conferences will be available from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Self-Help Center will continue to monitor telephone messages and will return calls with 24 hours. Contact information: SelfHelpCtrHarford@mdcourts.gov or 410-638-4916.

DOCKETING AND SCHEDULING PRIORITIES

In Phase V, the Court will resume full operations, including scheduling jury trials in criminal and civil case types as indicated in the Administrative Order. In person hearings will resume for most cases. Unless otherwise requested and permitted by the Court, remote hearings will be held in the following types of cases:

Criminal bail review hearings

Guardianship hearings

Family law cases: uncontested divorces, default hearings, exceptions, scheduling conferences

Family Law Magistrate hearings

In addition, attorneys and parties must provide an email address for a remote video hearing for which an electronic device (e.g., computer, tablet, smart phone) *with a camera* will be needed. For those without access to the Internet, telephonic participation may be permitted if appropriate and necessary. For more information, refer to the Court's Guidelines and Procedures for Remote Hearings on the Court website.

CONCLUSION

The Court will strive to hear all matters during Phase V in a safe and efficient manner. All Courthouse employees and occupants, attorneys, litigants, and visitors, are expected to exhibit the utmost degree of civility and patience appropriate to having matters resolved in this public forum.

DATE: March 2, 2022

/S/ ANGELA M. EAVES,
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE