

THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,
MARYLAND

COPING WITH COVID-19 TOGETHER

A RE-OPENING GUIDE FOR THE PUBLIC



THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,
MARYLAND

WELCOME



The Honorable
Sheila R. Tillerson Adams
Chief and Administrative Judge of the Circuit
Court for
Prince George's County and the
Seventh Judicial Circuit of Maryland



**"THINGS ARE
SURE TO
LOOK A
BIT DIFFERENT"**

The Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams

WELCOME BACK PRINCE GEORGIANS!



A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

THE HONORABLE SHEILA R. TILLERSON ADAMS

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and consistent with the guidance issued by health authorities and the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, the Circuit Court for Prince George's County has been operating virtually and has been closed to the public for in-person services since March 17, 2020.

Now, with the guidance from the County Health Officer, and in accordance with the Chief Judge of Court Appeals, the Circuit Court began its reopening process to the public on July 20, 2020.

However, this will be a very gradual reopening process in accordance with the phases set forth herein, with the ultimate goal and priority for the safety of the citizens that we serve.

This guide will provide you with answers to your general questions and address your concerns about visiting the courthouse.

There are new requirements that must be followed for the protection of everyone.

This continues to be a journey and this pandemic has changed our world in unprecedented ways. Things are sure to look a bit different. We're all adapting because we've put new things in place for your safety, but adjusting is necessary.

These are stressful times and this is a new normal for everyone, so let's get through this TOGETHER!

COURTHOUSE VISITOR SCREENING PROTOCOL

- Face masks/coverings are required in the courthouse at ALL TIMES!
*Your nose and mouth should NOT be exposed!
- Temperature checks are required to enter
- Pre-screening questions will be required upon arrival
- No lingering in the halls
- You may be asked to wait outside



PHASE THREE SERVICES

*The following services will be offered by appointment only:

- a. Obtaining information from the Clerk of the Court
- b. Appointments with the Family Division Paralegal Unit
- c. Legal advice from Community Legal Services
- d. Appointments with the Trust Office
- e. Obtaining transcripts or discs from the Court Reporters Office

*All other offices of the courthouse - call ahead to schedule an appointment before coming

- Courtroom seating will be limited - only litigants and their witness will be allowed in the courtroom
- The public is asked not to bring additional people when coming to the courthouse
- The Children's Waiting Room is closed. Try to make alternative arrangements for small children
- Check the website regularly for updates at www.PrinceGeorgesCourts.org



PHASED APPROACH RE-OPENING TIMELINE

*This timeline may be altered to accommodate changes in the containment of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

PHASE THREE

(July 20th / 6 Weeks)

The courthouse will gradually re-open to the public, subject to health screenings prior to entry. Some courthouse services will resume by appointment only; most proceedings will proceed virtually. Hearing types increase, but scheduling will be staggered to limit flow of individuals in the courthouse. Most proceedings will be held virtually.

PHASE FOUR

(August 31st / 5 Weeks)

In this phase, the Court will increase the type of matters that will be heard including contested hearings and bench trials. Remote status hearings and uncontested matters permitted.

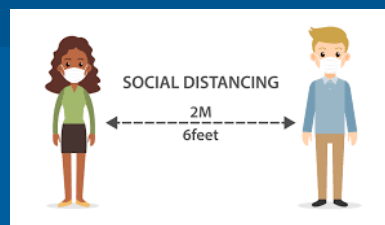
PHASE FIVE

(October 5th / TBD)

Full operations resume with COVID-19 being identified as contained and no longer impacting Court operations.

PHASE SIX / TBD

Full operations are expected at this juncture when COVID-19 has been identified by health officials as contained and no longer impacting Court operations.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following FAQs are intended to provide clarity for citizens about how the Circuit Court for Prince George's County is handling its Court operations in response to COVID-19 and its impact to operations.

These will continue to evolve as we receive additional questions and as information progresses. Information is subject to change and we will post updates as they occur.

Commitment to Customer Service

The Circuit Court for Prince George's County is committed to providing service to citizens of Prince George's County in such a manner that demonstrates a commitment to public service. In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Circuit Court for Prince George's County was closed to the general public; however, limited services and emergency services were offered on a remote basis, but will gradually re-open on July 20, 2020 pursuant to the Court's phased re-opening plan.

Commitment to Health and Safety

The safety of our community and our workforce is our highest priority. For current information on COVID-19, and guidance from the Health Department and the County Executive Office, visit health.mypgc.us/coronavirus.

Below are frequently asked questions that we have received from the general public thus far. They have been collected and compiled for public dissemination on this website. This document will be updated periodically as we receive new inquiries with answers to be added as we remain closed.

Family Division FAQs

Q. 1: The other Party is not allowing me to see my child like the Order states. What can I do so that I can see my child while the Court is closed?

A.: Parties can file appropriate motions with the Court. All filings may be submitted at the designated Dropbox located at the Commissioner's entrance of the courthouse.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Q. 2: Consistent with my Court Order, the noncustodial parent has been granted supervised visitation with my child. How will this service take place?

A.: All supervised visitation will take place virtually. The Children's Rights Council virtual supervised visitation parenting services to Parties referred by the Circuit Court. To register for services, visit the Children Rights Services website at: <https://www.crckids.org/access/schedules>.

Q. 3: Consistent with my Court Order, the noncustodial party and I are ordered to meet at the Children's Rights Council to drop off and pick up our child(ren), how do I register for services?

A.: The Children's Rights Council provides monitored exchange services to Parties referred by the Circuit Court. To register for services, visit the Children Rights Services website at: <https://www.crckids.org/access/schedules>.

Q. 4: I have an upcoming hearing scheduled. Will my case be heard in Court?

A.: If your case is scheduled for a hearing before August 30, 2020, the hearing will be conducted virtually.

Q.5: My Court Order states that I am supposed to take parenting classes, how do I register for the class?

A.: To schedule your co-parenting class, call (410) 740-9553 ext. 207 or visit the National Family Resiliency Centers website at: www.nfrchelp.org. Click on the 'co-parent education' link at the top of the webpage, then click 'register now'.

Q. 6: My Court Order states that a social worker will be conducting an evaluation in my case. How will that take place?

A.: If you are scheduled for a custody evaluation, you will be contacted by a social worker via phone to schedule a date in which the evaluation will be conducted via Zoom.

Q. 7: My Court Order lists dates that I am supposed to submit required documents to the Court and to the other Party. Do I still need to submit the paperwork by those dates?

A.: Yes. All filings may be submitted at the 24-hour Dropbox located at the Court at the Commissioner's entrance.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Q. 8: Where do I file my answer/response to the divorce/custody/child support complaint filed against me?

A.: All filings may be submitted at the 24-hour Dropbox located at the Court at the Commissioner's entrance.

Q. 9: I would like to file a Protective Order Petition and/or a Petition for Emergency Evaluation. What do I do?

A.: All Protective Orders and Emergency Evaluations must be filed at the courthouse in Hyattsville or Upper Marlboro between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. within the District Court or the Circuit Court Clerk's Office. However, if you arrive after 4:30 p.m., which is after-hours, you must go to the Commissioner's Office located at the Jail at 13400 Dille Drive, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772 or at the courthouse in Hyattsville located at 4990 Rhode Island Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland 20781.

Law Library FAQs

Q. 1: May I get access to the Maryland Code and the Maryland Rules from home?

A.: Yes. Below are two (2) options. Unannotated versions of the code are provided by Lexis and Westlaw. <http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/mdcode/>
<https://govt.westlaw.com/mdc/Index>

Q. 2: May I get access to the Prince George's County Code from home?

A.: Yes. The website is:

https://library.municode.com/md/prince_george's_county/codes/code_of_ordinances

Q. 3: How may I request to have my Court date postponed?

A.: Go to <http://www.mdcourts.gov/courtforms> and search for "Motion to continue" or access form here.

Q. 4: I cannot afford to hire an attorney. What pro bono and referral services can you offer?

A.: Below are six (6) options:

1. Maryland

Volunteer Lawyers Services: (800) 510-0050 or <https://mvlslaw.org>

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

2. Pro Bono Resource Center

of Maryland: (800) 492-1964 or <http://www.probonomd.org/> for a list of local pro bono organizations.

3. Civil Justice (410) 706-0174, press 1. Complete intake form at www.civiljusticenetwork.org/ForConsumers/Intakeform.aspx

4. Prince George's County Bar Association lawyer referral: (301) 952-1440

5. Maryland Legal Aid: (877) 310-1810

6. Maryland Office of the Public Defender (for defendants in a criminal case): (877) 430- 5187 or <http://www.opd.state.md.us/>

Q. 5: Where may I get help with a foreclosure?

A: Call Maryland Courts Self-Help Center at (410) 260-1392 or chat at www.mdcourts.gov/legalhelp/selfhelpcenters.html

Call Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, Inc.

Intake hotline: (240) 391-6370, ext.2.

Maryland Hope Hotline: (877) 462-7555.

The State of Maryland has created a website to guide you to resources that may be available to assist both homeowners and renters facing foreclosure. The site includes information to help you understand the foreclosure process and the options that may be available to you. You can also find information that will lead you to a local housing counseling agency in your area that can assist you on a more personalized level.

You may file a Request for Waiver of Filing Fee for Foreclosure Mediation at <https://www.courts.state.md.us/node/3507915> if you chose to participate in Foreclosure Mediation.

Q. 6: What happens after my paperwork is served?

A.: The person served has 30-days to answer if (s)he is served in Maryland, 60-days to answer if (s)he is served out of state, and 90-days to answer if served outside the United States.

Read the rule for Circuit Court: Md.

Rule 2-321, 2-323

Read the rule for District Court: Md. Rule 3-307

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Q. 7: I need a Motion form. Where do I look?

A.: The Maryland Judiciary has some Court forms at
Go to <http://www.mdcourts.gov/courtforms> and search for “Motion”

Q. 8: How do I file a judicial review?

A: The Maryland Rules for filing for Judicial Review can be found beginning with Maryland Rule 7-201. The Petition must be filed generally within 30-days. See Maryland Rule 7-203.

<http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/mdcode/>

<https://govt.westlaw.com/mdc/Index>

Q. 9: How do I find a Resident Agent?

A.: Use the Maryland Business Search
at <https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch> to search for the business name. Once you find the correct listing it will have the information for the business' Resident Agent.

Q. 10: How do I find out information about my case?

A: Go to the Maryland Judiciary Case Search
at <http://casesearch.courts.state.md.us/casesearch/> and search by name. You may have to also search by county, type of case and/or court system to narrow your results.

Q. 11: How can I get my criminal record expunged?

A. Different types of records have different removal procedures. The Prince George's County Circuit Court Law Library has an Expungement Fact Sheet that has links to articles, legal providers, apps and official Maryland forms for filing.

The Maryland Judiciary publishes an Expungement brochure here that describes the law and steps necessary to file for an expungement.

Q. 12: How do I serve someone?

A. The Prince George's County Circuit Court Law Library has a Service of Process Research Guide that has links to articles and official Maryland forms.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Jury Duty FAQs

Q. 1 I received a summons for Jury Duty. What do I do?

A.: Jury service is not anticipated to resume until October 5, 2020.

Q. 2: I've heard that Jury Duty is only required once every three years. Since I've been called and was scheduled and ready to appear, is my obligation to serve for this cycle satisfied?

A.: Your service will be satisfied for the calendar year. You may be summoned again as early as next year. You may receive another notice if your summons to appear was canceled.

Q. 3: Will I get something in writing stating that I do not have to come?

A.: No. If you are not required to report, you will not receive anything from the Court.

Q. 4: I took off from work for my Jury Duty that is now canceled. Will I still be paid for the day?

A.: No. You will not be paid by the Court for jury service that was cancelled. If you have questions about whether you will be paid by your employer, please check with your Employer's Human Resources Department or manager.

Q. 5: I'm scheduled to appear during the time the court has suspended Jury Duty. Should I call anyone to confirm that I'm not coming?

A.: No. Your service for the calendar year will be satisfied. Please refer to the reporting message at (301) 952-4387.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Q. 6: Will my Jury Duty be rescheduled?

A.: No, but you may be summoned again in the future.

Q. 7: I've always wanted to participate in Jury Duty. When service begins again, if I have mild symptoms, can I wear a mask and gloves and still come?

A.: No. If you are ill, please stay home and contact the Jury Office at (301) 952-4385 to reschedule your service to a later date.

Q. 8: When service begins again, if I am healthy but worried about contracting an illness from others, may I wear a face mask and gloves?

A.: Yes. Face masks are required and you may wear gloves.

Q. 9: If I had the Coronavirus, how do I know if it's safe to return and participate?

A.: Please consult your doctor. Contact the Jury Office at (301) 952-4385 to reschedule.

Q. 10: I think my symptoms are related to allergies. Can I still participate in Jury Duty?

A.: Please get tested and consult your doctor. You may need to reschedule your jury service to a later date.

Q. 11: I want to participate, and I know my symptoms are related to allergies. Do I need a doctor's note to participate?

A.: Yes. A doctor's note is required to participate. However, you can get tested and show your negative results. You can reschedule by calling (301) 952-4385 or visiting <https://ejury.mdcourts.gov/login>.

Q. 12: I've heard that the virus can remain on stainless steel and other surfaces for days. How can the Court assure me that a risk no longer exists?

A.: The Jury Assembly Room has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. Once jury service resumes, the room will be cleaned daily. The Court can not assure against all risks.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Q. 13: Even after Jury Duty resumes, if I have a weakened immune system or other high-risk conditions (e.g. high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.), what do I need to provide to avoid service at this time?

A.: If you would like to be excused from jury service for medical reasons, you will need to provide a doctor's note that states you cannot serve Jury Duty; or you can reschedule your service to a later date by calling (301) 952-4385 or visiting <https://ejury.mdcourts.gov/login>.

Q. 14: I'm generally healthy, but age 60+ and concerned. May I opt out of service at this time?

A.: You can reschedule your jury service to a later date by calling (301) 952-4385 or visiting <https://ejury.mdcourts.gov/login>. You may only be excused from your service with a doctor's note stating that you cannot serve jury duty.

Q. 15: Will I be able to engage in social distancing and keep six (6) feet away from everyone else?

A.: The Court will make efforts to keep the number of jurors required to report as low as possible while the threat of Coronavirus remains. The Court is making every effort to establish a social distancing protocol for jury service. If you are ill, it is important that you contact the Jury Office at (301) 952-4385 to reschedule your service.

Q. 16: Since I must have direct contact with Court employees, have they been tested for the Coronavirus?

A.: Employees with symptoms will not be at work or allowed to return for at least two (2) weeks and/or without a doctor's note. Some employees have been tested. All will wear masks and each employee will also have their temperature checked upon entering the courthouse daily.

Q. 17: Is there a way to go through the process and avoid direct contact with employees and staff?

A.: We will make efforts to keep contact to a minimum; however, it cannot be eliminated.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Q. 18: What about space for deliberations?

A.: The Court will use larger than normal deliberation spaces to allow jurors to maintain proper social distancing.

Q. 19: Have the shuttles been cleaned? Will they be regularly cleaned? How and how often?

A.: Yes. The shuttles are cleaned daily.

Q. 20: If Court closures are extended, how will I know?

A.: Check the Court's website periodically for updates at <https://princegeorgescourts.org>. Please check local news stations as well.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Court Reporter's Office FAQs

Q.1: Which services do the Court Reporter's Office provide?

A.1: The Court Reporter's Office provides transcripts of all Circuit Court proceedings and, if available, copies of audio on CDs/USB drives of Circuit Court proceedings.

Q.2: How do I contact the Court Reporter's Office?

A.2: Email address: courtreporters@co.pg.md.us

Phone Number: 301-952-3461

Room Number: D3002

Q.3: How do I obtain a transcript of a circuit court hearing?

A.3: Please access the Appeal and Non-Appeal Transcript Order Form online at <https://princegeorgescourts.org/276/Ordering-a-Transcript>

Q.4: What if I don't know all the information needed to fill out the Transcript Order Forms?

A.4: Go to the Maryland Judiciary Case Search for more information, e.g., case number, style of the case, dates of hearings, judge's name, etc.

<http://casesearch.courts.state.md.us/casesearch/>. Or, you may call the Court Reporter's Office.

Q.5: How do I order a CD/USB of an audio proceeding?

A.5: Please access CD/USB Audio Forms online at <http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov> and type "CD Order Form" in the search engine.

NOTE: Not all hearings have audio available for purchase. If you are unsure whether audio is available, please contact the main office of the Court Reporter at 301-952-3461.

Q.6: How do I find out the cost of ordering a CD/USB drive?

A.6: If you are ordering a USB drive, the cost is \$20.00 per date requested. If you would like to order a CD, please contact the main office to obtain the cost of the CD(s) as prices may vary depending on the length of the audio proceeding.

NOTE: If you are unsure whether audio is available, please contact the main office of the Court Reporter at 301-952-3461.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Q.7: What can I do with a copy of an audio recording of proceedings that I purchase from the Circuit Court?

Q.7: Copies of audio recordings of proceedings can only be used for listening purposes. You may not transcribe from the audio or use the audio in Court. If after purchasing an audio CD/USB drive and you decide to you would like to order a transcript, please refer to A.3.

Q.8: How do I pay for a CD/USB drive of an audio proceeding?

A.8: Please pay online at: <https://circuitcourt.princegeorgescountymd.gov/>
The Case ID is the case number; Party ID/Party Name, please enter "Plaintiff" or "Defendant". Once you have paid online, please email your receipt of payment to the main office at courtreporters@co.pg.md.us

Problem Solving Courts FAQs

Q. 1: If I am in a crisis, who do I contact?

A.: The Prince George's County Crisis Hotline at (301) 429-2185 and your case manager or your program coordinator.

Q. 2: Will I still be required to drug test?

A.: If testing sites are open, yes.

Q. 3: Do I still need to go to treatment?

A.: If providers are open, yes. We're providing treatment remotely. Please contact your case manager for further instructions.

Q. 4: Do I still need to attend NA/AA meetings?

A.: If sessions are being provided, yes.

Q. 5: Will I be sanctioned if I don't attend Problem Solving Court's Court ordered requirements out of concern for being on public transportation and in confined spaces with treatment providers?

A.: This will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Contact your case manager for further instructions.

FAQS FOR CITIZENS, CONT.

Q. 6: How may I submit any required documents to my case manager such as (e.g. paystubs, journals, verification of meetings, restitution receipts)?

A.: Contact your case manager for further instructions.

Q. 7: If I am scheduled to be taken off of GPS/SCRAM/Home Detention, will that happen?

A.: Contact your case manager for further instructions.

Q. 8: If I am ready to be released from inpatient treatment and/or the Department of Corrections (DOC), will that happen?

A.: If court allows for teleconferencing and/or remote hearings, yes.

Q. 9: Who do I contact in case of an emergency with my child?

A.: Contact your case manager for further instructions.

Q. 10: My GPS/SCRAM bracelet is not working, what shall I do?

A.: Contact your case manager for further instructions.

Q.11: If don't see the answer to my question, may I contact someone at PSC?

A.: Yes. You may call (301) 952-2780. However, please be patient, as some staff may be working from home or transitioning into working from home. Leave a message on this line and your phone call will be returned as soon as possible.

- END -