

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY,
MARYLAND**

Administrative Order

WHEREAS, by Order filed March 1, 2022, the Court of Appeals of Maryland directed the Maryland Judiciary to return to Phase V operations effective March 7, 2022;

WHEREAS, the Order requires the Administrative Judges of the Circuit Court and the District Court in each County to determine together social distancing, masking, and screening measures consistent with local conditions and appropriate public guidance;

WHEREAS, the Administrative Judges of the Circuit Court and the District Court in Montgomery County, MD met with local health officials to discuss appropriate social distancing, masking, and screening measures; and

WHEREAS, on February 25, 2022, the Center for Disease Control determined the COVID-19 transmission status of Montgomery County, MD to be "Low" and such status has continued to the date of this Administrative Order; and

WHEREAS, the safety of those who work and visit at the courthouse is of the utmost importance and the Court shall continue to monitor COVID-19 conditions.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to MD Rule 16-105 and the Fifth Amended Administrative Order Expanding Statewide Judiciary Operations in Light of the Covid-19 Emergency filed March 1, 2022, by the Court of Appeals of Maryland, it is this 4th day of March 2022,

ORDERED, effective March 7, 2022, and until further Order of Court:

- All matters before the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, MD, including trials (jury and non-jury), grand jury proceedings (currently convened and new grand juries), hearings and conferences, shall proceed as scheduled subject to the following health measures, which shall be observed;
- The wearing of face masks is voluntary for any judge, Judiciary personnel, and any other person entering the courthouses who have been fully vaccinated as defined by Center for Disease Control guidelines;

- Any judge, Judiciary personnel or other person who enters the courthouse and who are not fully vaccinated, as defined by the Center for Disease Control guidelines, shall wear a mask; however, a presiding judge or magistrate may order such individuals to remove their mask as necessary for the purpose of testifying or identification;
- No person who has been diagnosed with and remains ill with COVID-19 may enter the courthouse;
- No person who has not been fully vaccinated and is aware of having been exposed to a person infected with COVID-19 and is within the applicable quarantine period may enter the courthouse;
- All individuals, regardless of vaccination status, who seek entrance to the courthouse shall be subject to COVID-19 screening questions;
- A presiding judge or magistrate may limit the concentration of individuals in a particular area when appropriate; and
- Notwithstanding the foregoing, all individuals entering the Court's Kids Spot shall be required to wear a mask;

and, it is further,

ORDERED, unless you are notified to the contrary by the presiding judge or magistrate, the following hearings shall be heard virtually, and participants will be provided a link from the Court for access:

- Civil motions hearings not requiring testimony;
- Register of Wills proceedings not requiring testimony;
- Guardianship proceedings not requiring testimony;
- Civil pretrial hearings in Track 2 and Track 3 cases;
- Scheduling/Rule 4-215 criminal hearings;
- Criminal pretrial hearings;

- All 10-minute uncontested divorce hearings before Family Magistrates (but note: 30-minute uncontested divorce proceedings shall be conducted in person);
- All Scheduling Conferences, Settlement Status Conferences and Settlement Pre-Trial Conferences before Family Magistrates;
- CINA emergency hearings, preliminary inquiries in non-shelter CINA cases, uncontested shelter hearings, pre-trial hearings, mediations, voluntary placement agreement (VPA) hearings, permanency planning review hearings without a plan change, 3-816.2 review hearings, and guardianship review hearings (i.e., virtual hearings will continue to operate as they do presently);
- Juvenile Delinquency preliminary inquiries, pre-trial hearings, review hearings, pending placement status hearings, detention review hearings, emergency detention hearings, status hearings, STET hearings, unserved writ status hearings, qualified residential treatment program (QRTP) hearings, closure hearings, and uncontested competency hearings (i.e., virtual hearings will continue to operate as they do presently); and
- Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) scheduling hearings and service status hearings (i.e., virtual hearings will continue to operate as they do presently);

and, it is further,

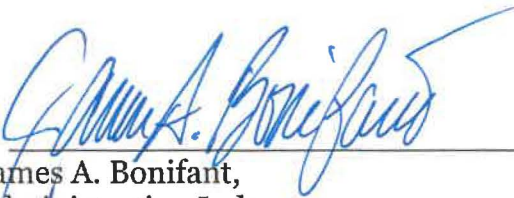
ORDERED, all other trials and hearings not mentioned in the preceding paragraph (including but not limited to, criminal and civil jury and bench trials, criminal motions, violations of probation hearings, sentencing hearings, adoption hearings, juvenile peace order hearings, temporary and final protective order hearings, and evidentiary hearings before Family Magistrates) shall be conducted in-person **unless you are notified to the contrary by the presiding judge or magistrate;**

and, it is further,

ORDERED, that all court departments shall be open to authorized visitors;

and, it is further,

ORDERED, that the Administrative Order filed August 9, 2021, is hereby rescinded.



James A. Bonifant,
Administrative Judge,
Circuit Court for Montgomery County, MD