

Judicial Memorandum

NOTICE

On May 6, 2020, the Supreme Court issued an order, modifying the limitations previously established by the Judicial Emergency first declared, on March 16, 2020 and subsequently extended until May 17, 2020. The May 6th order permits each locality to begin handling “Nonessential matters” in open court, subject to Governor Northam’s directives regarding public gatherings, and social distancing. Attorneys, defendants and other interested parties are directed to check with the District court in which their matter is to be heard, to be advised of the specific terms and conditions which will apply to the opening of that District Court location.

Therefore, beginning May 18, 2020, and continuing until further order of the Court, the General District Court of Botetourt County will begin hearing cases under the following guidelines:

All persons entering the Courthouse will be screened to minimize risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus.

1. The Bailiffs will direct persons to the Court room or waiting area with the understanding that “social distancing” and gathering limitation size (10 persons per group) will be observed.
2. No persons other than defendants and subpoenaed witnesses will be permitted to enter the Courthouse.
3. All persons entering the Courthouse are required to wear a protective face mask.
4. Once your case has been heard, all persons are asked to immediately exit the Courthouse.

5. Before each Docket day, all attorneys with cases set on the docket, are requested to contact the Commonwealth Attorney's office to attempt to resolve their matter, and to discuss an "appearance" time to avoid unnecessary numbers of persons in the Courthouse at one time.
6. Cases that can be resolved by agreement with the Commonwealth, (without incarceration), may be submitted to the court before the trial date, without the appearance of the Attorney or defendant.
7. The Court will be attempting to "stagger" cases to accommodate the attorneys and clients as stated in "6" above.

The Court requests that everyone be mindful that this process will be a "work in progress" and may take some time to work out problems. If everyone is patient, and understanding, we will all get through this pandemic safely and without unnecessary conflict. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. It is so **ORDERED**:

Date: 5/7/20

William H. Cleaveland

William H. Cleaveland, Chief Judge