

Chesapeake General District Court COVID-19 Updated Operating Schedule

The Supreme Court of Virginia has modified the Order declaring a Judicial Emergency in response to COVID-19 stating that effective May 18, 2020, all courts may hear in-person non-emergency matters if they determine it is safe to do so, and provided they comply with the guidance for transitioning from emergency to routine operations provided by the Office of the Executive secretary in order to minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19 from in-person court proceedings.

The Chesapeake General District Court will implement the following additional procedures:

The Court will begin hearing non-emergency traffic, criminal and civil cases on May 18, 2020; however, initially, the court will hear fewer cases than normal.

The clerk's office will begin accepting and processing civil pleadings.

All arraignments and bail hearings for traffic and criminal cases will be held between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. daily via videoconferencing in the criminal courtroom. For any bail hearings not completed by 10:00 a.m., those hearings will be held either at the conclusion of the Circuit Court bail hearing docket or the following business day.

Defendants in custody will appear via videoconference for all pre-trial hearings allowed by statute. Defendants will not be transported from the Chesapeake City Jail to the courthouse unless consent has been given by the Court 48 hours in advance. Inmates housed in other facilities will not be transported until further notice of this court. Attorneys will not be able to meet with inmates in courthouse lockup areas. The Chesapeake City Jail allows attorneys to meet with their clients for confidential communication in person Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Litigants are encouraged to resolve as many pretrial matters as possible with or without the assistance of the courts. If an agreement is reached, Counsel may contact the Court and request an earlier hearing date. To allow time for lengthy or complicated cases, please contact the Court and request additional time on the docket.

Unless authorized by the Court in advance, only parties, witnesses and their attorneys will be permitted in the courtroom.

The Court has implemented a liberal continuance policy. If you would like to request a continuance, please contact the clerk's office as soon as possible by telephone, U.S. mail or email.

Effective May 18, 2020, the Magistrate's office will set arraignment hearings for bonded defendant's for July 7, 2020, and each successive court date thereafter, i.e., defendants bonded and released on May 19, 2020 should be set for July 8, 2020. This schedule will continue through the end of August 2020.

All proceedings will be conducted at the counsel tables. Please do not approach the bench.

All parties entering the courthouse are encouraged to use a face covering to cover their nose and mouth to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This is an additional public health measure people should take to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in addition to (not instead of) social distancing, frequent hand cleaning and other everyday preventive actions.

Individuals who have retained counsel and counsel has provided a letter of representation with dates, are not required to appear for arraignment.

If you are ill, caring for someone who is ill, or who are otherwise in a high-risk category, as defined by the CDC, please call the court to request an appropriate accommodation.

The Chesapeake Sheriff's Weekender program is suspended until further notice.

Court personnel have updated the Case Management System with new court dates. Please visit www.vacourts.gov to determine your new court date.

To the extent possible, the court and clerk's office shall remain operational and provide essential services while balancing the health and safety needs of court visitors and personnel.

This order may be modified on a case-by-case basis as circumstances require.

Effective: May 12, 2020