

VIRGINIA:

IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURT OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC AND THE BAR

May 26, 2020 Target Date.

The Supreme Court's Order dated May 6, 2020 authorizes this Court, as of May 18, 2020, to begin hearing "in-person non-emergency matters if [this Court] determines it is safe to do so."

After consultation with local public health and safety authorities, the Court has determined that it is **unable resume "in-person non-emergency matters" on May 18, 2020** consistent with the Supreme Court's Order. In plain terms, this means that the Court will not return to its normal docket schedule on May 18. The status quo based on the Court's Orders dated April 23 and 24, 2020 will remain in effect through May 25, 2020.

The Court is targeting May 26, 2020 as the date for its return to handling "in-person non-emergency matters." This date is contingent on completion of ongoing efforts to ensure reasonable courthouse and courtroom safety for lawyers, litigants and the public. The Court therefore anticipates a further notification regarding the May 26, 2020 target date, to be issued and publicized during the week of May 18.

Civil Matters.

The general docket at 10:00 a.m. and all hearings and trials scheduled during the week of May 18, 2020 are continued for 14 days from the current return date. Plaintiffs are responsible for notifying defendants in writing of the new court date.

The Court anticipates resuming its normal civil dockets on the target date of May

26. The cases on the Court's docket during the period May 26 through June 12, 2020 are limited in number. For that reason, the Court believes that all matters during that period may go forward as scheduled, subject to social distancing and other safety requirements discussed below.

Additional issues:

- **For all civil cases filed on and after May 26, 2020**, the filing party must obtain **advance approval of the court date and time** from the Clerk's Office. You may consult with the Clerk's Office in-person or by phone to obtain your court date. **Until further notice, any paper or pleading filed after May 26, 2020 without prior approval of the court date and time is subject to being returned to the filing party for resubmission with an approved court date.** This temporary inconvenience is necessitated by the Court's Covid-related need to manage the number of persons scheduled to be in each courtroom at any given time.
- **During the period June 15 through July 9, 2020**, the Court's general dockets at 10:00 a.m. contain far more cases than can safely be handled at one time. The Court is devising a plan to manage the dockets from June 15 through July 9 and will notify the public and the bar once the plan has been finalized.

Criminal Matters.

As in the case of the civil docket, if health and safety issues are resolved as anticipated, **regular criminal dockets**, including the 9:00 a.m. dockets in the John Marshall and Marsh Courthouses, **will likely resume on the target date of May 26, 2020.**

Matters on the criminal dockets in both courts for the week of May 18 are continued to the corresponding day of the week in the week of June 29 (with May 22 cases continued to July 2).

As authorized in the Court's Order dated April 23, 2020, any case involving an incarcerated defendant may be advanced on the docket with leave of court on motion.

Incarcerated defendants in criminal cases with hearings scheduled on and after May 18, 2020 will not be transported to the courthouse except by Order of the Court on motion of a party with three days' notice.

Traffic Matters.

All traffic cases on the Court's 11:30 a.m. dockets in the John Marshall and Marsh Courthouses for the weeks of May 18 and 26, 2020, except those in which there is a felony or driving under the influence charge, are continued to the officer's next date in August or September 2020. Specific dates are available from the Clerk's Office or online.

The **toll violation appeals dockets** on May 19 and 26 are continued to October 6 and 13, 2020, respectively. The **parking ticket appeals dockets** on May 20 and 27 are continued to October 7 and 14, 2020, respectively. The **bus camera video cases** on May 19 are continued to September 15, 2020. The three **animal control cases** scheduled for May will be continued through the Clerk's office to animal control officer dates in August 2020.

Safety Issues.

All persons entering the courtrooms in the John Marshall and Marsh Courthouses must comply with the following requirements:

- All persons entering the courthouse are strongly encouraged to wear a mask
- All persons entering any courtroom in the John Marshall (2nd Floor) and Marsh Courthouses are REQUIRED to have a mask in place if within six feet of any person in any of the courtrooms
- All persons entering the courthouse are subject to limited questioning for possible recent exposure to the Covid-19 Virus

- All persons entering the courthouse must allow a noninvasive body temperature check; no one with an elevated body temperature will be permitted to enter the courthouse
- At all times, social distancing must be maintained, specifically at least six feet of separation from any other person in the courtroom
- All persons must observe courtroom markings and signage showing approved, socially distanced seating and standing positions for ensuring social distancing
- All persons entering the courthouse must observe the guidelines “to minimize the spread of Covid-19” issued by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia
http://www.vacourts.gov/news/items/covid/2020_0511_recovery_guide.pdf).

May 14, 2020

L. B. Cann, III, Chief Judge