

MIDDLESEX COUNTY GENERAL DISTRICT COURT

ORDER EXTENDING COVID-19 EMERGENCY MEASURES

It appearing to the Court that on May 6, 2020 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia entered an Order extending the Declaration of Judicial Emergency through June 7, 2020.

And it further appearing to the Court that the Chief Justice's May 6, 2020 Order confers to this Court the authority to establish local procedures for safely re-opening the Court to hear non-emergency matters.

The Court finds the following docket management and emergency measures are necessary to protect the health and safety of the public and Court personnel. It is, therefore, **ORDERED**:

1. The Court will make every effort to limit the number of people allowed inside the courtroom and require that all occupants maintain a social distance consistent with the guidelines established by the Supreme Court of Virginia's publication "Pandemic Continuity of Operations Planning: Reconstitution."
2. In addition to necessary Court personnel and security, entrance into the courtroom shall be limited to the parties, their counsel, one court reporter, any necessary interpreters, necessary witnesses, the press and court watch groups.
3. Any participant who meets the following criteria shall be denied entrance into the courtroom:
 - a. Any person who has recently traveled internationally;
 - b. Any person who has been directed to quarantine or self-isolate, been diagnosed with, or has had contact in the preceding 14 days with someone who has been diagnosed with, COVID-19;
 - c. Any person who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; or
 - d. Any person who resides with or been in close contact with someone in the aforementioned categories.
4. Civil Unlawful Detainer (UD) cases may be filed on or after June 1, 2020. Until July 25, 2020, all such UD filings for eviction based on nonpayment of rent or other monetary fees shall be accompanied by a Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act affidavit. Filings and hearings relating to other civil matters may commence immediately on May 18, 2020.

5. In traffic and criminal cases, the Court waives any requirement that the defendant affix an original signature to the following forms:
 - a. Acknowledgment of Suspension or Revocation of Driver's License, Form DC-210;
 - b. Request for Appointment of a Lawyer, Form DC-334; and
 - c. Financial Statement—Eligibility Determination for Indigent Defense Services, Form DC-333.

This signature waiver shall remain in effect until the expiration of the state of emergency declared in the Commonwealth of Virginia by Governor Ralph S. Northam on March 12, 2020 in Executive Order Number 51.

Entered this 14th day of May, 2020:

Stephanie E. Merritt
Stephanie E. Merritt, Judge