

SUFFOLK GENERAL DISTRICT COURT
TEMPORARY POLICIES & PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO SUPREME COURT OF
VIRGINIA'S ONGOING DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY AND ORDER DATED
MAY 6, 2020

In an effort to protect the safety of court staff, litigants and the general public, and in accordance with the Supreme Court of Virginia's ongoing Declaration of Judicial Emergency and its order dated May 6, 2020, this court will require that all parties and witnesses adhere to the Center for Disease Control's recommended social and physical distancing guidelines. Consequently, the court will limit the number of individuals present in the courtroom and the Clerk's Office in an effort to ensure that those present remain at least six feet apart; no more than two (2) individuals are permitted in the public area of the Clerk's Office at any given time. Individuals with business before the court or in the Clerk's Office are **expected to wear facial masks or coverings** unless directed otherwise by the court. Parties are encouraged to conduct as much business as possible by fax and email. When possible, parties are encouraged to consider video conferencing, telephone, teleconferencing, email, fax or other means that do not involve in-person contact. Parties seeking to have a matter heard via video conference or teleconference by agreement, should contact the Clerk's Office for guidance and scheduling.

DETERMINATIONS OF COUNSEL & BOND HEARINGS

- All determinations of counsel for incarcerated defendants will be conducted via video.
- All determinations of counsel for defendants who are not incarcerated will be continued to a date after June 8, 2020.
- All bond hearings, unless otherwise authorized by the court, will continue to be conducted via video.

CRIMINAL AND DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE CASES

- Beginning May 18, 2020, the court will hear all felony preliminary hearings, driving under the influence and related misdemeanor and traffic matters as previously scheduled. All other criminal and traffic matters will be continued until after June 8, 2020. The new date for cases that are continued will be posted on the court's website. Notices providing the new court dates will also be mailed.

CIVIL CASES

- Beginning May 18, 2020, the court will hear as previously scheduled all contested civil matters. Garnishment returns will be also be heard as currently scheduled. All other civil matters will be continued until after June 8, 2020. The new court date for cases that are continued will be posted on the court website. Notices providing the new court date will also be mailed.

CONTINUANCES

- Requests for continuance will be liberally granted for any cause resulting from the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The parties should make every effort to notify the court in advance to avoid unnecessary court appearances.

EMERGENCY MATTERS

- The court will continue to hear emergency matters such as protective orders, quarantine or isolation matters, and civil commitment hearings as warranted.

ORDER REGARDING ENTRY INTO THE COURTROOM

- Individuals that fall into the following categories are **ORDERED** (see Order entered on May 11, 2020) not to enter the courtroom:
 - a. Visited China, Iran, South Korea, any European countries or any other high-risk countries identified by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in the previous 14 days;
 - b. Traveled domestically within the United States where COVID-19 has sustained widespread community transmission in the previous 14 days;
 - c. Been asked to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor by any doctor, hospital, or health agency in the previous 14 days;
 - d. Been diagnosed with, or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the previous 14 days;
 - e. Have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath; or
 - f. Reside with or has been in close contact with any person in the above-mentioned categories.
- Individuals attempting to enter the court in violation of these protocols may be denied entrance by a bailiff or court security officer and directed to contact the Clerk's Office by telephone or other remote means to inform the clerk of their business before the court so as to receive further instruction regarding alternate arrangements for court access.

PRELIMINARY PROTECTIVE ORDERS

- All determinations will be made based upon the affidavit provided by the petitioner; the petitioner will not appear before a judge to present evidence.

HEARINGS/TRIAL

- Only necessary individuals, including parties, witnesses, attorneys, and court reporters, and members of the press will be permitted in the courtroom.
- All hearings/trials will be heard from the counsel tables; no hearings/trials will be conducted at the bench.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Attorneys: Please make efforts to obtain written stipulations of facts, when possible, in order to avoid witnesses attending court unnecessarily.
- Please notify the Clerk's Office promptly and before coming to court if you have knowledge that a party, witness or counsel has recently been recently exposed to COVID-19 or an individual who has tested positive or displayed symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- If you are unsure if a case in which you are involved is proceeding as scheduled, please check the court's website at <http://www.courts.state.va.us/> (once there, click "Case Status and Information" on the left side of the screen, then click "General District Court Case Information," then after accepting the terms and conditions, select "Suffolk General District Court" and conduct the relevant search), contact an attorney involved in the case, or call the Clerk's Office.

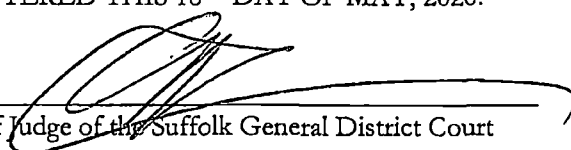
VIRGINIA: IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CITY OF SUFFOLK

AMENDED ORDER

This Court, through its chief judge, Honorable Alfred W. Bates, III, hereby ORDERS that any and all individuals who have visited China, Iran, South Korea, any European countries or any other high-risk countries identified by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in the previous 14 days, have traveled domestically within the United States where COVID-19 has sustained widespread community transmission in the previous 14 days, have been asked to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor by any doctor, hospital, or health agency in the previous 14 days, have been diagnosed with, or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the previous 14 days, have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or reside with or have been in close contact with any person in the previously stated categories are prohibited from entering the courtroom.

It is further ORDERED that any individuals included in the above-referenced categories contact the Clerk's Office by telephone or other remote means to inform the Clerk of their business before the court so as to receive further instruction regarding alternate arrangements for court access.

ENTERED THIS 18TH DAY OF MAY, 2020.



Chief Judge of the Suffolk General District Court