

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

**THIRD AMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER REGARDING WEARING OF FACE
MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIRCUIT
COURT
(AO-E15)**

The Circuit Court for Montgomery County continues to closely monitor state and local responses to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and follow guidance provided by state and local public health agencies and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC having advised people to take precautions, and having noted that the best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposure to the virus, and for good cause found, it is this 3rd day of August, 2020, by the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, Maryland

ORDERED, that masks or face coverings shall be worn at all times in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, including during court proceedings, except as noted below, by all occupants of the courthouse, including but not limited to judges and magistrates and any person over the age of two years, with masks or face coverings to cover both the nose and mouth completely, and it is further

ORDERED, that in instances where any person arrives at the courthouse without an adequate mask or face covering, they shall be provided with a disposable mask, if available, or given alternative means for remote access, if appropriate and possible, and it is further

ORDERED, that barriers, including clear personal barrier shields, are not a substitute for masks or face coverings and shall not fulfill the masking requirement described in the first paragraph above, and it is further

ORDERED, that social distancing of six feet or more shall be maintained throughout the courthouse, including in offices and courtrooms, but will not be a substitute for the masking requirement, and it is further

ORDERED, that with appropriate social distancing, masks or face coverings may be lowered to eat, drink, or take oral or nasal medications, but shall be replaced upon completion, and it is further

ORDERED, that throughout courtroom proceedings, all participants shall wear masks or face coverings as required except that, for good cause shown, the presiding judge or magistrate may permit any participant, when speaking, to use a disposable mask or wear a personal barrier shield in lieu of a mask to ensure that the participant can be heard, with due consideration given to social distancing and other public health guidelines, and it is further

ORDERED, that where courthouse occupants, including Register of Wills, Sheriff's, and State's Attorney's Office employees, are assigned to single-occupancy enclosed offices, masks may be lowered when the occupant is alone and the door is closed, but masks must be worn when any other person enters the office or the occupant leaves the office, and it is further

ORDERED, that where courthouse occupants, including Register of Wills, Sheriff's and State's Attorney's Office employees, are assigned to common area workspaces, including cubicles, masks shall be worn, and it is further

ORDERED, that no more than four persons shall ride on a courthouse elevator at the same time, and it is further

ORDERED, that stairwells within the courthouse (the use of which are encouraged) shall be designated as single directional as follows:

- In the North Tower, the north stairwell shall be for upward movement only, and the south stairwell shall be for downward movement only.
- In the South Tower, the interior right stairwell shall be for upward movement only, and the interior left stairwell shall be for downward movement only, and it is further

ORDERED, that before any person is admitted to the courthouse through a public entrance, or any employee arrives at their work station, he or she shall be required to answer medical screening questions related to possible COVID-19 exposure, and it is further

ORDERED, that before any person is admitted to the courthouse through a public entrance, or an employee arrives at their work station, he or she shall consent to a non-contact thermometer check, and is barred from entry or remaining in the courthouse if he or she declines to be tested, or registers a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more, and it is further

ORDERED, that any courthouse employee who feels ill, or exhibits commonly-known symptoms of COVID-19, including but not limited to cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell or related symptoms, must report that fact to a supervisor, immediately depart the courthouse, and seek medical attention where appropriate, and it is further

ORDERED, that until further notice, public entrance to the courthouse shall be limited to the Monroe Street and Maryland Avenue entrances; and it is further

ORDERED, that until further notice, all court filings shall be made by way of the United States Postal Service, or delivered into the physical dropbox located at the Maryland Avenue entrance, or made pursuant to an electronic filing method approved by the Court and identified on the Court's website, montgomerycountymd.gov/cct. Oversize filings shall be filed at the

Maryland Avenue entrance dropbox only. Filings for Land Records shall continue to be accepted at 10:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, and 2:00 p.m. at the Maryland Avenue entrance; and it is further

ORDERED, that until further notice, appointments must be made to review physical case files at the courthouse; obtain copies of case documents; be sworn to a public office such as special police officer or notary public; or visit the Register of Wills Office, the Sheriff's Office, or the State's Attorney's Office. Appointments for courthouse services (which do not include the agencies listed in the previous sentence) shall be made pursuant to the procedure described on the Court's website, montgomerycountymd.gov/cct; and it is further

ORDERED, that the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office is authorized to deny admission or remove any person from the courthouse who is not in compliance with any of the terms of this Order; and it is further

ORDERED, that this Order supersedes the Second Administrative Order Regarding Wearing of Face Masks and Social Distancing in Montgomery County Circuit Court, entered June 1, 2020.



ROBERT A. GREENBERG

Administrative Judge

Circuit Court for Montgomery County, Maryland