

## **PHASE V OF THE REOPENING PLAN IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT (9/25/20)**

The Circuit Court will enter Phase V of the statewide reopening plan on Monday, October 5. This is the final phase in the reopening process. Civil and criminal jury trials will resume at that time. All policies and procedures from the *Montgomery County Circuit Court Reopening Plan – Phase 4 Advancement*, posted on the court's website at [montgomerycountymd.gov/cct](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/cct), remain in place, with the following modifications:

- Effective October 2, 2020, the policy making all active judges plea-eligible in criminal cases is terminated. Only judges in the Criminal Rotation, the Administrative Judge, Resolution Conference judges, or an assigned trial judge on the day of a scheduled trial may hear guilty pleas.
- All documents sought to be admitted as exhibits in civil and criminal jury trials must be submitted to the court on the day of trial, with copies for the court, opposing counsel, and all jurors.
- Copies of proposed *voir dire* questions and jury instructions in all civil and criminal jury trials must be submitted to the court at least one week in advance of trial.
- A videoconference station within the courthouse has been established for the use of self-represented litigants who do not have access to wi-fi, own a smartphone, computer, or other device able to support videoconferencing.
- Other than employees, only litigants, their attorneys, and testifying witnesses will be permitted in the courthouse, unless previously cleared with the presiding trial judge. For other courthouse visitors, appointments are necessary, including to view files, or to visit any department other or agency in the courthouse.
- Hours for the Maryland Avenue entrance to the courthouse will be extended on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday to accommodate sanctioned after-hours activity.

Until physical distancing and indoor capacity restrictions are eased, it is anticipated that current limitations and restrictions regarding the Law Library, Clerk's office, Family Law Self-Help Center, licensing department, and other courthouse offices will continue. **The court will continue to encourage the use of Zoom for Government for many types of proceedings, including non-jury trials, whenever possible.** Please visit the court's website for further information on licensing, review of case files, courthouse access, and the conduct of jury trials.