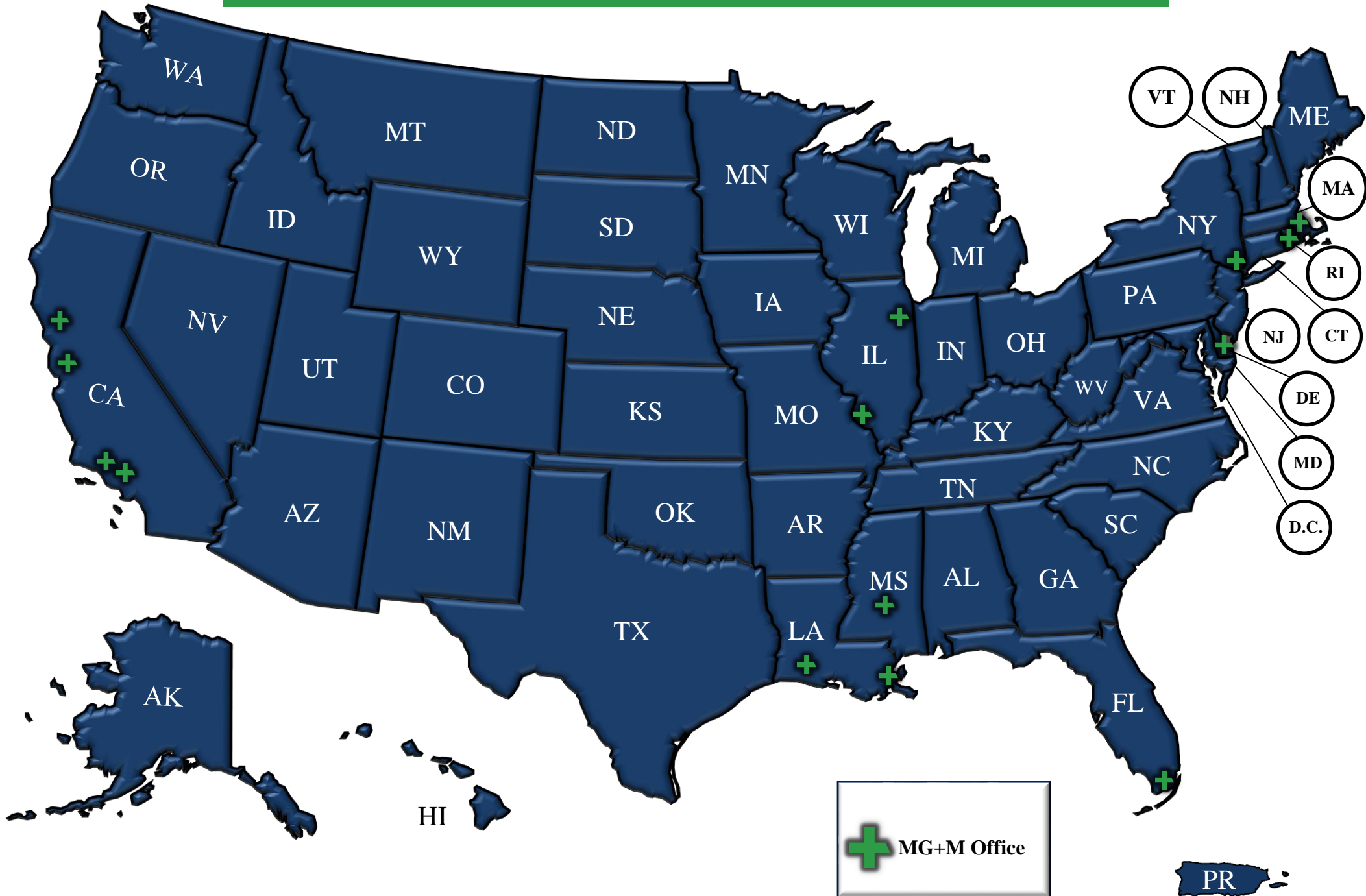


# COVID-19 State Reopening Survey

Please click on any individual state to obtain information related to that state's current reopening efforts



## ALABAMA

**Operative Order:**     [Administrative Order No. 9: Extending Orders Pertaining to Workers' Compensation Cases and Remote Testimony](#)  
(December 21, 2020)  
[Administrative Order No. 8 – Extending Orders Pertaining to Workers' Compensation Cases and Remote Testimony](#)  
(August 14, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    [https://judicial.alabama.gov/Announcement/COVID\\_19](https://judicial.alabama.gov/Announcement/COVID_19)

The Alabama Supreme Court declared a state of emergency for the Judicial Branch of the State of Alabama pending further order on March 24, 2020. The Court has extended the Orders until April 30, 2021, or until further order of the Court.

Subject to the approval of the Presiding Circuit Judge of each circuit and subject to the provisions of this order, jury trials were suspended until September 14, 2020. In-person hearings in the circuit courts, district courts, juvenile courts, municipal courts, and probate courts were permitted but not required to begin on or after May 15, 2020.

The Chief Justice has issued that the taking of witness testimony by remote means has been extended until April 30, 2021, or further order of the Court.

For the purposes of determining whether to recommence in-person court hearings, the Presiding Circuit Judge is granted authority to make decisions regarding the safety and welfare of all court personnel in all courts within the circuit. The Presiding Circuit Judge is specifically authorized to adopt procedures that, in his or her discretion, will implement the recommendations and requirements of the "Safer at Home Order" so as to protect court employees and other individuals accessing all courts within the circuit. In making such determinations and before adopting any order or procedures, the Presiding Circuit Judge should consult with other judges in the circuit, the Chairman of the County Commission(s), the Circuit Clerk(s), the Sheriff(s), the District Attorney, and the Public Defender in counties or circuits having a full-time public defender.

## ALASKA

**Operative Order:**      [Update regarding COVID-19 and Criminal Jury Trials](#)  
(March 1, 2021)  
[Update regarding COVID-19 and Grand Jury Proceedings](#)  
(February 1, 2021)  
[Special Order of the Chief Justice Order No. 8213](#)  
(November 25, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <http://courts.alaska.gov/covid19/index.htm>

The Alaska Supreme Court declared a statewide public health emergency for the Judicial Branch of the State of Alaska pending further order. The court system has devised procedures to allow trials with social distancing and other protective measures, but to start public trials at this time would be unduly dangerous.

All in-person civil jury trials are suspended until at least September 7, 2021. This suspension does not apply to trials (such as presumptive death trials) in which videoconference proceedings have been approved. The continuation of this suspension will be reviewed on or shortly after July 23, 2021.

All in-person grand jury proceedings were suspended until February 8, 2021. The time limit for preliminary examination under Alaska Criminal Rule 5€ is extended through April 15, 2021. The time limit may be extended thereafter by the district court as provided in that rule or by the presiding judge. The continuation of this statewide suspension will be reviewed on or shortly after January 15, 2021.

Misdemeanor jury trials may resume on April 19, 2021 under the discretion of the presiding judge. Felony jury trials remain generally suspended until at least June 1, 2021. The continuation of this suspension will be reviewed on or shortly after April 2, 2021.

The presiding judge may allow an in-person jury trial or in-person grand jury proceeding in exceptional circumstances. A party may request such an order by making a motion to the assigned trial judge. The trial judge will make findings on all relevant factors and submit a recommendation to the presiding judge for decision.

The presiding judge may approve a request for a jury trial to be conducted by videoconference by agreement of the parties. All other court proceedings will be conducted by teleconference or videoconference whenever possible.

## ARIZONA

**Operative Order:**     **[Authorizing Limitation of Court Operations During a Public Health Emergency and Transition to Resumption of Certain Operations](#)**  
(December 3, 2020)  
**[Exception to Jurors' Terms of Service During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)**  
(November 5, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    **<https://www.azcourts.gov/covid19/>**

The Supreme Court of the State of Arizona declared a statewide public health emergency for the Judicial Branch of the State of Arizona pending further order. Arizona courts remain open to serve the public. Nevertheless, given the ongoing threat to public safety, certain limitations and changes in court practices and operations are still necessary.

All Arizona Courts and the office of the presiding disciplinary judge may continue transitioning to in-person proceedings to the extent this can be safely accomplished.

Jury trials resumed on June 15, 2020, subject to judicial discretion related to health and safety.

Starting on July 1, 2020 the public received access to criminal and civil court proceedings by video or phone.

Presiding superior court judges decide when jury and grand jury proceedings can resume, and technology can potentially be used for juror selection as well as grand jury proceedings and jury trials.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, until March 31, 2021, a court may re-summon a juror who was previously summoned and has met their term of jury service.

Until December 31, 2020, to reduce the number of citizens summoned to jury duty, procedural rules are modified to afford litigants only two peremptory strikes for potential jurors per side in all civil and felony cases tried in the superior court, and one peremptory strike per side in all misdemeanor cases, and all civil cases tried in limited jurisdiction courts. This provision does not apply to capital murder cases.

Until Phase III, judicial leadership should limit any required in-person proceedings to attorneys, parties, victims, witnesses, jurors, judicial officers, court employees, and other necessary persons, where necessary to maintain the courtroom.

## ARKANSAS

**Operative Order:**     [In re Response to the COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#)  
(February 12, 2021)  
[In re Response to the COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#)  
(January 5, 2021)  
[In re Response to the COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#)  
(November 20, 2020)  
[Guidelines for In Person Proceedings](#)  
(July 1, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.arcourts.gov/arkansas-supreme-court-statement-novel-coronavirus-outbreak-and-courts>

On March 11, 2020, the Governor of Arkansas declared a State of Emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which remains in effect. The Supreme Courts of the State of Arkansas have remained open and will continue to remain open. On November 20, 2020, the Supreme Court of Arkansas announced new protocols to maintain the safety of jurors, litigants, attorneys, court personnel and the public.

Jury trials that have not begun are suspended until May 1, 2021. Jury trials that are currently ongoing will be completed.

The Supreme Court of Arkansas is encouraged by the recent downward trend in COVID-19 infections in the state and by the increase in vaccinations. Going forward, we will continue to monitor these trends with the anticipation that jury trials will resume.

On July 1, 2020, the Supreme Court of Arkansas released a letter to judges regarding the exact precautions needed when conducted in-person hearings in the [Guidelines for In Person Proceedings](#).

Decisions on whether to conduct in-person versus remote proceedings should be based on the growth rate of the virus in the area, the size of the venue in which court is conducted, the security measures necessary to hold in-person proceedings, the availability of personal protective equipment, and other relevant factors.

## CALIFORNIA

**Operative Order:**     **[Judicial Branch of California – Emergency Rules Related to COVID-19](#)**  
(Amended November 13, 2020)  
**[Order of Chief Justice of California Regarding COVID-19 Court Operations](#)**  
(April 29, 2020)  
**[Order of Chief Justice of California Regarding COVID-19 Court Operations](#)**  
(March 23, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    **<https://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/covid-19-news-center>**

California Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency in California and California counties began issuing shelter-in-place or stay-at home orders beginning on March 16, 2020. Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-33-20, requiring all Californians to stay home, subject to certain exemptions. Courts are included in this exemption.

[Click here](#) to find a cohesive table containing the summary of changes to court operations in response to COVID-19, with data provided by superior courts.

All jury trials are suspended and continued for a period of 60 days from March 23, 2020. Courts may conduct such a trial at an earlier date, upon finding of good cause shown or through the use of remote technology, when appropriate.

There has been an order that the 60-day continuance of jury trials is to be calculated from the date for which the trial was set or extended, whichever is longer. Additionally, courts will be supported in making use of available technology to conduct judicial proceedings and court operations remotely, suspend any rule in the California Rules of Court to the extent such rule would prevent a court from using technology to conduct judicial proceedings and court operations remotely, in order to protect the health and safety of the public, court personnel, judicial officers, litigants, and witnesses. This is consistent with the Governor's order, which also provides for the suspension of related statutes that impose limitations on the subject of these emergency orders.

Superior Courts have been authorized to issue implementation orders that extend the time period provided for the holding of a preliminary examination and the defendant's right to release from 1- court days to not more than 30 court days. Additionally, extending the time period within which a defendant charged with a felony offense must be taken before a magistrate from 48 hours to not more than seven days. Extending the time period for the holding of a criminal trial by no more than 60 days from the last date on which the statutory deadline otherwise would have expired. Extending the time period to bring an action to trial by no more than 60 days from the last date on which the statutory deadline otherwise would have expired.

## COLORADO

**Operative Order:**     [Updated Order Regarding COVID-19 and Operation of Colorado State Courts](#)  
(July 24, 2020)  
[Updated Order Regarding COVID-19 and Operation of Colorado State Courts](#)  
(June 15, 2020)  
[Updated Order Regarding COVID-19 and Operation of Colorado State Courts](#)  
(May 5, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**   <https://www.courts.state.co.us/announcements/COVID-19.cfm>

The Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court ordered the state courts to continue to operate on an emergency basis.

Each jurisdiction is posting materials [on this website](#) with important information for jurors, litigants, and probationers about protocols for appearing in court. This information is in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and outlines the decisions and procedures created by each court to operate during the outbreak. Information is available for county and district courts via the court's individual webpage.

Because jury pools still cannot be assembled consistent with existing public health guidelines, no person will be summoned by state courts to assemble for jury service to begin any time prior to August 3, 2020, unless or until further modification of this Order.

In consideration of constitutional and statutory rights to jury trials, and the imperative to secure those rights as expeditiously as feasible, any Chief Judge devising an approach for the conduct of limited jury trials consistent with health guidelines and local executive orders concerning assembly and personal contact may seek a waiver of this prohibition against the assembly of jury pools.

No person will be summoned to assemble for jury service in a state court without the authorization of the Chief Judge of the particular judicial district, following his or her determination that the jury pool in question can be safely assembled consistent with applicable executive orders and health directives.

The Chief Judges of the various districts are expected to continue to make all reasonable efforts to facilitate work by department employees from remote locations and to minimize personal contact. To that end, and with the understanding that some judicial proceedings may require personal appearances, wherever reasonably feasible, judicial proceedings, regardless of their nature, should continue to be conducted remotely.

## CONNECTICUT

**Operative Order:**      [CT Judicial Branch Continues to Expand Court Operations](#)  
(August 28, 2020)  
[Connecticut Judicial Branch Continues With Expansion of Operations](#)  
(June 4, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://jud.ct.gov/COVID19.htm#Notices>

On June 4, the Connecticut Judicial Branch issued a notice regarding continued expansion of operations. The expansion will bring the number of open courthouses to 17 – the Supreme and Appellate courts, 13 Superior Court locations and two juvenile court locations. As such, one Superior Court courthouse will be open in each of the 13 Judicial Districts.

As of August 28, 2020, trials and other proceedings involving juries are suspended until further notice. Four new locations have opened up to the public. The range of non-jury related civil, criminal, family and juvenile proceedings are being processed both by remote technology and within courthouses.

Most work within the open court locations will continue to focus on those most pressing matters such as criminal arraignments for defendants held on bond, domestic violence cases, restraining orders, emergency child custody matters, juvenile detention hearings, and all other emergency matters. The Branch continues to expend the handling of criminal matters as well.

Judges will begin conducting remote pretrial conferences on Monday, June 8. The initial focus of these remote pre-trials will be on cases involving defendants in custody. If an agreement is reached, the case will be docketed for plea and/or disposition.



## DELAWARE

**Operative Order:**      [Administrative Order No. 17 Extension of Judicial Emergency](#)  
(March 3, 2021)  
[Administrative Order No. 16 Extension of Judicial Emergency](#)  
(January 28, 2021)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://courts.delaware.gov/aoc/covid-19>

On January 28, 2021, the Chief Justice, in consultation with other members of the Supreme Court, the presiding judges, and health experts, determined that the courts will continue to operate under Phase 2 of the Reopening Plan. Under Phase 2, in-person civil proceedings are suspended in favor of virtual proceedings. Any future jury trials remain subject to a detailed jury management plan provided by the Delaware Courts Reopening Committee.

The judicial emergency for all State courts and their facilities in Delaware is extended for another 30 days effective March 5, 2021, subject to further review. The courts will continue to operate under Phase 2 of the Reopening Plan.

For all court proceedings during Phase 2, the courts, when practical, should post on their websites the date and time of the hearing or proceeding, and when requested and permitted, provide reasonable access to media organizations.

The available calendars for appearances will be reduced in accordance with social distancing and building capacity limitations as directed by the Governor, Chief Justice, and Chief Magistrate. Civil and criminal locations will continue to employ alternatives to in-person appearances, such as appearances via video, whenever possible.

As recommended in the Interim Report, the courts, except for the Justice of the Peace Court which is addressed in the Order, will reopen to additional employees and the public in the phases set below. Modification of these phases may be necessary as the reopening proceeds, more information about COVID-19 becomes available, and public health experts track the spread of COVID-19 in Delaware.

## FLORIDA

- Operative Order:**     [Comprehensive COVID-19 Emergency Measures for Florida Trial Courts](#)  
(March 10, 2021)  
[COVID-19 Public Health and Safety Precautions for Operational Phase Transitions](#)  
(December 21, 2020)  
[COVID-19 Public Health and Safety Precautions For Operational Phase Transitions](#)  
(November 24, 2020)
- Relevant Website:**   <https://www.flcourts.org/Resources-Services/Emergency-Preparedness/COVID-19-Information-and-Updates>

On March 9, 2020, the Governor declared a State of Emergency in Florida. The Florida state courts have taken measures to mitigate the effects of this public health emergency upon the judicial branch and its participants.

Statewide grand jury proceedings were suspended through July 26, 2020. After the suspension, the proceedings will be conducted remotely or, if one of the following criteria is satisfied, may be conducted in person:

1. The presiding judge for the statewide grand jury, under consultation with the county health department or local health expert, determines that the in-person proceeding can be conducted in a manner that protects the health and safety of all participants if the circuit is in or has reverted to Phase 1; or
2. The circuit has transitioned to Phase 2 or Phase 3 pursuant to Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSCO20-32, as amended, and the proceeding is conducted in a manner that is consistent with the circuit's operational plan

If the presiding judge for the statewide grand jury determines that the proceedings of the statewide grand jury cannot proceed remotely or in-person in Phase 1, the presiding judge may issue a local administrative order suspending the proceedings for a specified period of time not to exceed 30 days after the circuit returns to Phase 2.

Court reopening protocols and practices will be guided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations and align with guidance provided by the Florida Department of Health, county health departments, and local medical professionals.

It is the intent of the judicial branch to transition to optimal operations in a manner that protects the public's health and safety during each of four anticipated phases of the pandemic. In Phase 1, in-person contact is inadvisable, court facilities are effectively closed to the public, and in-person proceedings are rare. In Phase 2, limited in-person contact is authorized for certain purposes but requires use of protective measures. In Phase 3, an effective vaccine is adequately available and in use and in-person contact is more broadly authorized. Finally, in Phase 4, COVID-19 no longer presents a significant risk to public health and safety.

## GEORGIA

**Operative Order:**     **[Twelfth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency](#)**  
(March 9, 2021)  
**[Statewide Judicial Emergency Order \(Original\)](#)**  
(March 14, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    **<https://georgiacourts.gov/covid-19-preparedness/>**

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia declared a Statewide Judicial Emergency in the State of Georgia, which is now extended until Thursday, April 8, 2021, at 11:59 p.m.

The blanket suspension of jury trials that has been in place since the December 23 order is ended effective immediately.

The surge in COVID-19 cases that led to the suspension of jury trials has declined. Thus, pursuant to this order, the prohibition against conducting jury trials is lifted, and trial courts, in their discretion, may resume jury trials as local conditions allow.

All courts are again urged to use technology when practicable and lawful to conduct remote judicial proceedings as a safer alternative to in-person proceedings. Where remote proceedings are not practicable or lawful, courts are reminded that in-person proceedings must be conducted in full compliance with public health guidance and the other local requirements set forth in the Ninth extension order and in light of local conditions.

It should be recognized that actual grand jury hearings and jury trials will not begin until a month or longer after they are authorized, due to the time required to summon potential jurors for service.

Statutory deadlines based on indictments and jury trials will remain suspended and tolled.

## HAWAII

**Operative Order:**      [Order Regarding Judiciary Operations](#)  
(February 12, 2021)  
[Order Regarding Judiciary Operations](#)  
(December 23, 2020)  
[Order Regarding Jury Trials](#)  
(September 28, 2020)  
[In the Matter of the Judiciary’s Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)  
(March 16, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://www.courts.state.hi.us/covid-19-information-page>

The Chief Justice issued an [Order](#) on March 16, 2020 which postponed non-urgent court business in an effort to ensure the health and safety of court personnel and users and minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 in the courts. This Order was further extended to April 13, 2021, while also ordering that certain matters be heard remotely by telephonic or video conference to the extent feasible.

Circuit courts resumed conducting jury trials beginning November 16, 2020.

The chief judges of each circuit court may continue to implement their plans to resume operations, including the resumption of jury trials as set forth in the [September 28, 2020 Order Regarding Jury Trials](#), provided that all operations will be conducted in compliance with social-distancing mandates as ordered by Governor Ige, including requiring the use of face coverings, and that the public health circumstances and any countrywide orders effective in each circuit are taken into account.

In-person proceedings are resuming in some courts in accordance with social distancing mandates. Remote hearings have been conducted in various matters in the circuit, district, and family courts. All circuits have prepared plans to restore operations to the greatest extent possible while minimizing physical presence and safeguarding the health of all court users.

It is further ordered that the emergency order previously issued by the chief judge of each circuit pursuant to the [March 16, 2020 Order](#) shall remain in effect, unless modified by the chief judge of said circuit.

## IDAHO

**Operative Order:**      **Commencement of Jury Trials and Grand Jury Empanelment**  
(February 3, 2021)  
**Re: Commencement of Jury Trials and Grand Jury Empanelment**  
(December 14, 2020)  
**In Re: Jury Trials**  
(September 16, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://isc.idaho.gov/Emergency%20Orders>

For public safety and to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus, all State of Idaho court proceedings and facilities will operate under limited directive.

Beginning on March 1, 2021, jury trials and impaneling of a grand jury commenced subject to the conditions and limitations in this Order.

Continuing service by seated grand juries will be left to the discretion of the presiding district judge who impaneled the grand jury, based on the standards and protocols set forth in this Court's September 16, 2020 Order.

As used in this order, the word "commence" means the first day members of a jury or grand jury venire are required to physically appear at a courthouse or designated facility.

Jury trials will be held in the following order of priority with the first being the most important and then listed in descending order:

- a. Criminal cases in which defendants are incarcerated
- b. Criminal cases
- c. Civil cases

Any person sixty-five years of age or older is eligible to have jury service postponed for one year.

All persons in the courtroom must wear a mask approved by the assigned judge at all times, unless an exception is granted by the assigned judge.

All other court proceedings are presumptively to be held remotely, with all participants utilizing remote technologies including teleconferencing and video conferencing. The Administrative District Judge has the discretion to impose restrictions and limitations on the manner in which courthouses and courtrooms are used, including restrictions and limitations on in-person proceedings.

## ILLINOIS

**Operative Order:**     **[Illinois Courts Response to COVID-19 Emergency/Remote Jury Selection in Civil Cases](#)**  
                                  (October 27, 2020)  
                                  **[Supreme Court Guidelines for Resuming Court Operations](#)**  
                                  (May 20, 2020)  
                                  **[Illinois Courts Response to COVID-19 Emergency](#)**  
                                  (March 17, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     **<http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Administrative/covid-19.asp>**

In accordance with the Statewide Emergency declared on March 9, 2020, an Order issued March 17, 2020 directed Illinois courts to hear “essential court matters and proceedings.” The order further authorized courts to conduct both essential and nonessential matters and proceedings remotely, subject to constitutional and practical limitations.

The Court continually and routinely issues supplements and amendments to the initial March 17, 2020 administrative order, each of which are issued on the Illinois Supreme Court’s dedicated COVID-19 resources website: <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/administrative/covid-19.asp>

Civil jury trials are necessary to the administration of justice in Illinois, and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an enormous impact on our entire court system, including the number of civil cases tried to verdict. Safely resuming civil jury trials will require modifications to court procedures and any local rules or administrative orders to allow for social distancing and compliance with public health protocols to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure by jurors, court personnel, litigants, and the public.

Remote jury selection by video conference in civil cases is permissible to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure so that litigants can access justice in a timely fashion while keeping all jurors, court personnel, litigants, and the public safe.

Subject to constitutional limitations, all courts, in civil or criminal case, may modify or suspend any deadlines and procedures, whether prescribed by local rule or order, for a stated period ending no later than 30 days after the Governor’s state of emergency declaration has been lifted.

## INDIANA

**Operative Order:**      **Order Suspending Jury Trials**  
(December 14, 2020)  
**In the Matter of Administrative Rule 17 Emergency Relief for Indiana Trial Courts Relating to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**  
(November 10, 2020)  
**In the Matter of Administrative Rule 17 Emergency Relief for Indiana Trial Courts Relating to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**  
(May 29, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://www.in.gov/judiciary/5575.htm>

As a result of the public health emergency relating to COVID-19, the Indiana Supreme Court ordered trial courts statewide to implement appropriate continuity-of-operations plans for providing essential judicial services on March 16, 2020.

In-person jury trials were allowed to resume on March 1, 2021, with all deadlines based upon trial dates adjusted accordingly. All other court proceedings and operations must be conducted in accordance with the directives of this Court's November 10, 2020 Order.

Trial courts have inherent authority to continue and/or reschedule non-essential hearings (excluding emergency matters, domestic violence hearings, and evidentiary hearings in criminal cases).

The public health emergency persists, as COVID-19 continues to spread. The Court, with the collaborative assistance of judges and practitioners, has released protocols on how to safely resume normal court operations and protocols for mitigating in-court exposures.

Trial courts should work with their local justice system partners and public health and emergency authorities to adjust court operations as conditions require to maintain essential functions and ensure the administration of justice while protecting the health of court personnel, court users, and Hoosiers outside the courtroom.

Courts will comply with, and enforce, local and statewide public health orders as they relate to court facilities, staff, and proceedings.

## IOWA

**Operative Order:**     [In the Matter of Ongoing Provisions for Coronavirus/COVID-19 Impact on Court Services](#)  
(December 30, 2020)  
[In the Matter of Ongoing Provisions for Coronavirus/COVID-19 Impact on Court Services](#)  
(November 24, 2020)  
[In the Matter of Prioritization of Cases and Duties](#)  
(July 9, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/covid-19-information-and-updates/>

In response to the public health emergency due to COVID-19, the Iowa Supreme Court declared a Judicial Emergency in March, 2020. The Iowa Supreme Court Order dated May 22, 2020 has since been modified and extended in the December 30, 2020 Order.

Jury trials resumed on February 1, 2021. Trials that had not begun as of November 16, 2020 and that were scheduled to begin before February 1, 2021 were continued to a date no earlier than February 1 2021.

In rescheduling jury trials, the court will use the case priorities in the supervisory order issued July 9, 2020 entitled “In the Matter of Prioritization of Cases and Duties.”

Judicial districts will schedule in-person hearings and trials so as to comply with safety protocols established by state court administration.

The court temporarily suspends the operation of any Iowa Court Rules to the extent they are contrary to any provisions of this order.

Courts will limit the number of simultaneous jury trials so as to accommodate physical distancing. There will be modified trial schedules to avoid unnecessary movement of jurors around the courthouse. Courts will consider increasing the number of jurors typically summoned with a recommended time period of 2-4 weeks earlier than usual to allow supplemental summoning if the initial yield is insufficient.

There is strong encouragement to conduct civil court business other than jury trials using videoconference or telephone.

Trial courts have discretion to conduct nonjury trials or accept specific testimony by videoconference or telephone with the parties’ consent.



## KANSAS

- Operative Order:**      [Administrative Order 2020-PR-123](#)  
(December 1, 2020)  
[Order Imposing Statewide Judiciary Restricted Operations Due to COVID-19  
Emergency](#)  
(March 18, 2020)  
[Requiring Masks in Appellate and District Courts](#)  
(July 2, 2020)  
[District and Appellate Court Operations as of September 4, 2020](#)  
(September 4, 2020)
- Relevant Website:**      [https://www.kscourts.org/About-the-Courts/Court-Administration/OJA/Kansas-Courts-Response-to-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\)](https://www.kscourts.org/About-the-Courts/Court-Administration/OJA/Kansas-Courts-Response-to-Coronavirus-(COVID-19))

Beginning with the filing of Administrative Order 2020-PR-016 on March 18, 2020, Kansas courts restricted functions or methods of operation in order to secure the health and safety of court users, staff, and judicial officers.

Courts not operating under 2020-PR-049 may resume holding jury proceedings after the chief judge has complied with two guidelines. The guidelines being consulting with the head of the local public health department or his or her designee to determine how to resume jury proceedings given local risk and the facilities available; and developed a written plan approved by the Office of Judicial Administration for implementing the Supreme Court mandates regarding resuming jury proceedings that will be on the Kansas judicial branch website along with best practice guidance.

To support the courts in planning, a task force will analyze the issues courts will face when jury operations resume. The task force will look at the best practices for conducting jury trials and grand jury proceedings while protecting the safety of judges, court staff, the public, litigants, witnesses, and jurors, including the use of virtual technology, sanitation practices, and maintaining physical distancing.

At times, courts may need to close offices or courtrooms temporarily due to changing COVID-19 conditions. If a court or court operations are in a county subject to a stay-at-home order; a county in which a municipality is subject to a stay-at-home-order; or a courthouse or court office that is not open to public operations for public health reasons they may be closed and subject to several operation functions.

Effective July 3, 2020, masks were required in nonpublic court offices where two or more individuals are present, unless physical shields are in place between individuals.

## KENTUCKY

**Operative Order:**     [In re: Kentucky Court of Justice Response to COVID-19 Emergency: Court Proceedings](#)  
(February 25, 2021)  
[In re: Kentucky Court of Justice Response to COVID-19 Emergency: Court Proceedings](#)  
(January 5, 2021)  
[In re: Kentucky Court of Justice Response to COVID-19 Emergency: Expansion of Court Proceedings](#)  
(May 29, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://kycourts.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

All civil and criminal jury trials will be postponed until after May 1, 2021, with in-custody criminal trials taking priority over all other matters.

Jury trials will only resume if the trial judge determines in his or her discretion, after having considered local public health conditions and the health and safety requirements established by the Supreme Court.

Grand juries will be conducted remotely via available telephonic or video technology, subject to applicable Rules of Criminal Procedure. Grand jury proceedings will resume after April 1, 2021.

Each chief district and chief circuit judge will develop a local protocol regarding any additional restrictions or changes in local procedure, consistent with this Order.

## LOUISIANA

**Operative Order:**     [Louisiana Supreme Court Order Addressing Statewide Court Proceedings](#)  
(February 11, 2021)  
[Louisiana Supreme Court Order Addressing Statewide Court Proceedings](#)  
(January 11, 2021)  
[Louisiana Supreme Court Order Addressing Statewide Court Proceedings](#)  
(May 15, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.lasc.org/COVID19>

Due to the continuation of the COVID-19 emergency in Louisiana, the Governor issued a renewal of state of emergency and the extension and modification of emergency provisions.

No civil or criminal jury trial will commence in any Louisiana state court before April 1, 2021. Civil and criminal jury trials that are in progress will continue to conclusion, in the discretion of the local court.

Louisiana Courts continue to be authorized to conduct in-person proceedings on all matters other than trial by jury. Therefore, for cases involving trial by jury, courts may conduct in-person proceedings in a pre-trial and post-trial posture.

Grand jury proceedings will continue and are not suspended. New grand juries may be empaneled as necessary.

Courts are encouraged to conduct remote proceedings by telephone, video, teleconferencing, or any other means that do not involve in-person contact with consent of all parties and the judge.

## MAINE

**Operative Order:**      [Order Regarding Trial Court Remote Proceedings and Public Access](#)  
(January 12, 2021)  
[Order Regarding Trial Court Remote Proceedings and Public Access](#)  
(December 14, 2020)  
[The State of Maine Judicial Branch COVID-19 Phased Management Plan](#)  
(May 27, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://www.courts.maine.gov/covid19/index.html>

On December 14, 2020, Maine’s Judicial Branch consolidated, clarified, corrected, and ratified several of prior Emergency Orders with respect to the orderly operation of Maine’s judicial system. Jury trials and grand jury proceedings may be scheduled and held in accordance with the COVID-19 Phased Management Plan.

Under the Phased Management Plan, the following hearings and proceedings may be held in person, unless otherwise ordered by the court:

- a. Criminal jury trials;
- b. Criminal arraignments or first appearances and motions for matters involving defendants not in custody;
- c. Title 22 protective custody hearings concerning jeopardy and termination of parental rights;
- d. Protection from abuse hearings;
- e. Protection from harassment hearings;
- f. Motions for contempt in family cases;
- g. Juvenile adjudication and dispositional hearings; and
- h. Forcible entry and detainer final hearings.

All proceedings not listed above will be held remotely, unless otherwise ordered by a court.

The trial court will initiate all video or telephone proceedings and will provide information and instructions to all parties for how to access the conference or hearing.

Courtrooms in use for non-confidential proceedings will remain open to the public during hours of operation. Any member of the public or media wishing to attend a non-confidential court proceeding may do so in person and subject to the required conditions set forth in the Phased Management Plan.

You should go to a courthouse only if you are required to be there, or if you are seeking protection from abuse or harassment.

## MARYLAND

**Operative Order:**     **[Seventh Amended Administrative Order Clarifying the Statewide Suspension of Jury Trials and Maintaining Grand Juries](#)**  
(February 16, 2021)  
**[In the Court of Appeals of Maryland Seventh Administrative Order Restricting Statewide Judiciary Operations Due to the COVID-19 Emergency](#)**  
(December 22, 2020)  
**[Amended Administrative Order Lifting the Statewide Suspension of Jury Trials and Resuming Grand Juries](#)**  
(June 3, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.courts.state.md.us/coronavirusupdate>

On June 3, 2020, the Chief Judge ordered that the resumption of certain judicial functions is possible, with the implementation of safeguards as advised by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Maryland Department of Health.

All civil jury trials in the Circuit Courts throughout the State of Maryland scheduled to begin on or after March 16, 2020 will be suspended on an emergency basis effective November 16, 2020, through April 23, 2021, unless a jury has been empaneled, with jury trial dates to be scheduled beginning April 26, 2021.

In order to achieve the requirements of social distancing, administrative judges may limit the number of people entering the courthouse or courtroom.

Emergency operations consist of five phases, each progressive phase representing an increase in the level of operation within court locations. As the COVID-19 profile changes throughout the state over the next several months, it may become necessary to retreat from a later to an earlier phase, or to adjust the phase in one or more specific jurisdictions within the state, with any required changes in phases to be announced as soon as feasible.

Should the CDC or MDH require a return to emergency operations during the COVID-19 emergency, a progressive, phased return to full operations by the courts in the Maryland Judiciary, court offices, administrative offices, units of the Judiciary, the Offices of the Clerks of the Circuit Courts, and the clerks' offices of the District Court will be the policy of the Maryland Judiciary, consistent with the measures taken since March 12, 2020.

The resumption consists of five phases, each phase representing an increase in the level of operation within court locations.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Operative Order:**     **Supreme Judicial Court Fifth Updated Order Regarding Court Operations During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**  
(February 24, 2021)  
**Courts Extend Start Date for Jury Trials to January 11, 2021**  
(November 20, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    **<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>**

To safeguard the health and safety of the public and court personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing to increase the business being conducted by the courts, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts issued an Order effective March 1, 2021.

Phase 2 of the resumption of jury trials in Massachusetts state courts will commence on March 1, 2021. During Phase 2, jury trials will continue to be limited to trials to juries of six (plus alternates), but priority will be given to criminal cases where the defendant is in custody. All jury trials shall continue to be conducted pursuant to the health and safety practices recommended in the JMAC Report, or any amendments to those practices.

Phase 2 shall begin with one trial at a time in each location, but may be expanded as experience and conditions permit. The scheduling of trials for Phase 2 will also continue to require the collaborative efforts of court leaders in each location and department, bar leaders, and counsel in each case. Ultimately, the specific cases that will be tried to juries during Phase 2, as well as the locations thereof, shall be determined by the Chief Justice of the Trial Court, and the Chief Justice of the applicable Trial Court department, in consultation with the Regional Administrative Justices and First Justices in each court.

Where an in-person hearing is scheduled, a party has the option to move that the hearing be conducted virtually, and the judge scheduled to preside at the hearing will rule on the motion.

This Order remains into effect until further notice.

## MICHIGAN

**Operative Order:**     **[Administrative Order No. 2020-19: Continuing Order Regarding Court Operations](#)**

(June 26, 2020)

**[Administrative Order No. 2020-10: Delay of Jury Trials](#)**

(April 23, 2020)

**[Administrative Order No. 2020-14: Continued Status Quo Court Operations and Phased Return to Full Court Operations](#)**

(May 6, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     **<https://courts.michigan.gov/News-Events/covid19-resources/Pages/AOs.aspx>**

Per order of the Michigan Supreme Court, courts must continue to conduct essential functions and are expected to use their best efforts to provide timely justice in all matters during the health crisis relating to the coronavirus pandemic.

All jury trials are delayed for a period of 60 days after April 23, 2020, lasting until June 22, 2020, or as otherwise provided for by local order, whichever date is later.

Courts that have progressed to Phase 3 will begin holding jury trials using trial standards approved by the State Court Administrative Office. Courts that are not yet in Phase 3 will proceed with jury trials only with approval from the State Court Administrative Office.

The State Court Administrative Office is authorized to initiate pilot projects regarding practices related to how to conduct remote jury trials. After the pilot projects are complete, the State Court Administrative Office will provide recommendations to assist all courts in providing jury trials that promote health and safety as well as protect people's rights.

Courts will continue to use and expand remote hearings as practicable and increase the court's capacity to conduct business online. Access to courtrooms and other spaces will be available to no more than 10 persons. Courts will maintain their current level of operations until a plan to expand in-court proceedings has been approved.

## MINNESOTA

**Operative Order:**     **[Order Governing the Continuing Operations of the Minnesota Judicial Branch](#)**  
(February 18, 2021)  
**[Order Governing the Continuing Operations of the Minnesota Judicial Branch](#)**  
(January 21, 2021)  
**[Order Requiring Face Coverings at Court Facilities](#)**  
(July 7, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    **<http://www.mncourts.gov/Emergency.aspx>**

The operations of the Minnesota Judicial Branch during the statewide peacetime emergency first declared by the Governor of Minnesota on March 13, 2020, are governed by the Order filed on May 15, 2020. The Judicial Branch has also adopted requirements for face coverings in court facilities, and has implemented exposure control measures at court facilities consistent with public health guidance.

Effective March 15, 2021, in-person criminal jury trials will be held in any county. District courts that schedule and hold an in-person criminal jury trial must adhere to the guidelines and exposure measures approved beforehand.

All other proceedings in the district court in criminal and civil cases, including civil jury trials, will be conducted remotely unless the chief judge of the district in which the proceeding is to be held grants an exception for an in-person proceeding.

Grand juries that were empaneled and taking evidence on a case as of the date of this order will continue to completion. No grand juries will be impaneled nor will grand jury proceedings commence before April 30, 2021, unless the chief judge in the district in which the grand jury is to be summoned, after consultation with the Chief Justice, has granted an exception for grand jury proceedings.

Judges and court staff will continue to process cases, in all case types, regardless of whether the judge or employee works at the court facility or remotely. Other than in-person proceedings outlined above, all proceedings in all case types, including proceedings in treatment courts, will be held by remote technology that permits the parties and attorneys to appear without being in the courtroom or by review of the parties' submissions without oral argument.



## MISSISSIPPI

**Operative Order:**      **[Emergency Administrative Order-17](#)**  
(December 1, 2020)  
**In re: Emergency Order Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**  
(September 4, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      **<https://courts.ms.gov/>**

The Mississippi Supreme Court continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and enters Orders as empirical data and changing circumstances dictate. Locate judges and their staff, in conjunction with local bar associations and elected officials, remain in the best position to balance the public-health risks in their communities related to COVID-19, while fulfilling their constitutional and statutory duty to keep the courts open.

Court personnel and all other persons appearing in the courtrooms must be masked at all times, unless the presiding judge uses their discretion to permit the temporary removal, if necessary to insure the accuracy and integrity of the proceedings.

The trial courts remain authorized to exercise their sound discretion in controlling their general dockets by case-specific actions or general orders. All court proceedings must be limited to attorneys, parties, witnesses, bailiffs, members of the press, and other necessary persons and staff, as determined by the trial judge.

During this emergency, judges are granted the authority to extend juror-age exceptions to persons 60 and older, if such persons desire to seek such exemption.

## MISSOURI

**Operative Order:**      [Operational Directives](#)  
(July 24, 2020)  
[Procedures for Jury Proceedings During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)  
(June 5, 2020)  
[In re: Operational Directives for Easing COVID-19 Restrictions on In-Person Proceedings](#)  
(May 4, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://www.courts.mo.gov/pandemic/>

The Missouri Supreme Court provided three Orders regarding the operational directives of the Judicial Branch in Missouri. The June 5, 2020 and July 24, 2020 Orders supplement and should be understood in conjunction with and during the effective period of the Court's May 4, 2020, Order and Operational Directives.

To see the phase in which a court is operating, refer to the map or drop-down menus on the [COVID-19 update homepage](#).

In order to conduct grand or petit jury proceedings under any phase, the presiding judge must determine whether the circuit has the proper facilities and equipment in place to conduct jury proceedings in compliance with social distancing protocols, local occupancy rate limitations, and other recommended health and safety strategies.

Effective May 16, 2020, court activity in all appellate and divisions of the circuit courts will be limited and restricted. In all judicial proceedings, courts and judges are encouraged to utilize all available technologies to conduct court activities remotely in order to limit the number of in-person proceedings conducted in courthouses.

Accordingly, presiding judges and chief judges should monitor local circumstances and conditions on a regular basis. Any movement to the next higher Operating Phase under these Directives can be made only after a court has been in the prior Operating Phase for a period of at least 14 calendar days. A court may revert back immediately to a prior Operating Phase when local conditions and circumstances require it.

## MONTANA

**Operative Order:**      [COVID-19 Memo from Chief Justice McGrath 12-21-2020](#)  
(December 21, 2020)  
[COVID-19 Memo from Chief Justice McGrath 5-22-2020](#)  
(May 22, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://courts.mt.gov/>

On May 22, 2020, the Montana Supreme Court Chief Justice issued a memo urging all Montana courts to implement several practices related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Chief Justice supplemented this memo on December 21, 2020.

Courts may hold jury trials at their discretion, but may do so only after sufficient planning and consultation with the attorneys involved in the cases, local law enforcement and local public health entities in order to ensure trials are conducted in such a manner as to maintain social distance and protect the health of jurors and others. At a minimum, courts must i) manage voir dire through enhanced questionnaires; ii) Excuse jurors in advance who may be at high-risk or have other appropriate reason to not report (lack of childcare, caring for a high-risk person, etc.); iii) Work closely with local public health officials to manage the number of jurors called for voir dire; iv) Seat jurors in compliance with physical distancing during the trial and deliberations; v) Limit any in-court spectators; and, vi) Make hand sanitizer and masks available to jurors and others in the courtroom.

Face masks or face coverings are required in all courtrooms and shared spaces in court-related offices and rooms. Face-coverings are not required in private offices or for anyone under the age of five. Judges maintain discretion to allow a party to remove a face covering or face mask while addressing the court or testifying in court.

Courts will continue to use remote-hearing or telephonic hearings for cases, which will allow a limit to the number of people in a courthouse and in a courtroom.

Courts will continue working with local public health officials to determine how to screen individuals entering the courthouse.

## NEBRASKA

**Operative Order:**     [In Re Novel Coronavirus and COVID-19 Disease](#)  
                                  (November 6, 2020)  
                                  [In Re Novel Coronavirus and COVID-19 Disease](#)  
                                  (June 30, 2020)  
                                  [In Re Novel Coronavirus and COVID-19 Disease](#)  
                                  (April 6, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**   <https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/nebraska-judicial-branch-emergency-status-information/orders>

No court shall close unless or until the Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court issues an order declaring a nonjudicial day. However, courts and probation offices shall continue to implement emergency preparedness plans to carry out mission essential functions.

Judges in each judicial district are encouraged to consult with each other and devise a uniform plan regarding adequate measures to limit the transmission of COVID-19 to staff, counsel, parties, and other participants. Such plans will be submitted to the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation.

If a court or probation office is holding any in-person proceedings or meetings, the court or office will outline, by local order or otherwise, at least one or more measures to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 to staff, counsel, parties, and other participants. This includes: screening of individuals for symptoms and exposure to COVID-19, social distancing spacing requirements in courtrooms and offices, use of masks, providing hand sanitizer, and/or sanitizing highly touched surfaces and areas where court services and proceedings are occurring.

In conjunction with the Supreme Court’s directive, the Nebraska State Court Administrator recommends that all local courts postpone trials and hearings, limit participants in courtrooms, and restrict those persons who may pose a health risk from the courtrooms and offices. However, the implementation of those recommendations is left to the discretion of individual courts and judges.

## NEVADA

**Operative Order:**      [Order Concerning Ongoing Administration of District Court Proceedings During COVID-19 Emergency](#)  
(April 10, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    <https://www.nvcourts.gov/supreme>

The Nevada Supreme Court issued an emergency administrative order that they encourage all Nevada District Courts to adopt in their respective jurisdictions to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection while preserving essential court services.

Pursuant to the Supreme Court's recommended administrative order, all civil and criminal jury trials will be suspended until 30 days after the order is lifted. Once the order is lifted, trials will be rescheduled as the court calendar allows, with priority given to in-custody defendants who have invoked their speedy trial rights.

District Courthouses remain open, but all persons who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or who have come into contact with another person diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days are restricted from entering. All non-essential district court hearings shall be conducted by video or telephonic means, decided on the papers, or continued, unless otherwise directed by a District Court Judge. Essential case type hearings may be conducted through in-person appearances, although appearance by alternative remote means is encouraged.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Operative Order:**     [Seventeenth Renewed and Amended Emergency Order Governing New Hampshire Supreme Court Proceedings and Restricting Access to the Supreme Court Building](#)  
(March 16, 2021)  
[Fifteenth Renewed and Amended Emergency Order Governing New Hampshire Supreme Court Proceedings and Restricting Access to the Supreme Court Building](#)  
(February 2, 2021)

**Relevant Website:**    <https://www.courts.state.nh.us/aoc/corona-covid-19.html>

As of March 16, 2021, and through April 5, 2021 and/or the last day of a Declared State of Emergency, the New Hampshire Superior Courts will remain open on a restricted basis, consistent with the Judicial Branch’s obligation to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19.

The clerk’s offices will not be open to the general public.

Subject to exceptions, all in-person proceedings in the Superior Court will remain suspended from March 16, 2021, through April 5, 2021 and/or the last day of a Declared State of Emergency. Exceptions to suspension of in-person court proceedings include, but are not limited to:

1. Proceedings necessary to protect constitutional rights of criminal defendants, including bail-related matters, trials and plea agreements for incarcerated individuals
2. Proceedings related to petitions for temporary emergency injunctive relief
3. Proceedings directly related to the COVID-19 public health emergency
4. Other exceptions as approved by the Senior Associate Justice of the Supreme Court

To comply with the ongoing recommendations to mitigate the risks of COVID-19, the court will conduct many of the above-referenced cases telephonically or by video, to the extent possible. During the period from March 16, 2021 through April 5, 2021, the court may convert already scheduled in-person court hearings to telephonic or video conference hearings or may cancel already scheduled in-person hearings.

The Superior Court will conduct any bench trial remotely.

The Chief Justice may determine, based upon staffing levels or other factors, that hearings in individual cases subject to the exceptions indicated above be conducted at court locations other than those at which they would normally occur or be conducted by video or telephone.

## NEW JERSEY

**Operative Order:**     **[Order, New Jersey Supreme Court](#)** (January 7, 2021)  
                                  **[COVID-19 – Fifth Omnibus Order on Court Operations and Legal Practice](#)**  
                                  (June 25, 2020)  
                                  **[COVID-19 – Second Omnibus Order on Court Operations and Legal Practice](#)**  
                                  (April 24, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     **[https://njcourts.gov/public/covid19\\_one-stop.html](https://njcourts.gov/public/covid19_one-stop.html)**

On January 7, 2021, the New Jersey Supreme Court issued an order authorizing virtual civil trials to begin in select jurisdictions on or after February 1, 2021 (Phase 1), with a statewide expansion on or after April 5, 2021 (Phase 2). Consent to proceed remotely will be required during Phase 1, but will not be required during Phase 2 because of the length of the continued dire public health threat posed by COVID-19.

During Phase 1 and Phase 2, relevant factors (including health-related or unavoidable travel-related barriers to attorneys convening in the courtroom) will be considered in scheduling cases for trial dates. Operational concerns will also be considered in determining if a case is suited for a virtual civil jury trial. Among other factors, cases involving evidence that will be difficult to present in a virtual format (e.g., physical objects that cannot be shown to jurors using an Elmo visual presenter or other technical solution), or matters that will require multiple interpreters for parties and witnesses, may be difficult to conduct in a virtual format.

Phase 2 will continue until further order but only as long as necessary based on the COVID-19 pandemic.

## NEW MEXICO

**Operative Order:**     [In the Matter of the Amendment of the New Mexico Judiciary Public Health Emergency Protocols for the Safe and Effective Administration of the New Mexico Judiciary During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)  
(November 13, 2020, amended December 14, 2020 and March 13, 2021)  
[In the Matter of Recommencing Jury Trials During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)  
(May 28, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.nmcourts.gov/covid-19.aspx>

The New Mexico Supreme Court suspended civil and criminal jury trials in light of the ongoing public health emergency beginning on March 17, 2020. On November 13, 2020, the latest public health order was issued to combat the increased spread of COVID-19 infections during the ongoing public health emergency through enhanced restrictions on in-person gatherings.

Civil and criminal jury trials resumed as of February 1, 2021.

The New Mexico Judiciary’s Emergency Court Protocols is temporarily suspending jury trials until January 1, 2021, while continuing to hold other judicial proceedings within strict limitations on in-person judicial proceedings required by existing Emergency Court Protocols, and to clarify out-of-state travel restrictions for judicial officers and judicial employees.

All hearings, including trials, and all other court-organized gatherings of any type and at any location will be held in a manner that limits the number of individuals in a single room or connected space – which includes judges, court personnel, jurors, attorneys, litigants, the press, and the general public – to allow for appropriate social distancing, as recommended by public health authorities.

All hearings, except for jury trials, will use telephonic or audio-video connection for court appearances, unless the judge presiding over the bench trial or other hearing makes oral or written findings of fact and conclusions of law supporting a compelling need for an in-person appearance that are specific to the particular circumstances in an individual case.

The evolving nature of the public health emergency permits the recommencement of jury trials in a matter that is consistent with the latest precautionary measures recommended by health officials for reopening New Mexico in a safe and gradual manner that is based on the local circumstances and available resources in each judicial district.



## [NEW YORK](#)

**Operative Order:**     [Message from Chief Judge Janet DiFiore](#)  
(March 8, 2021)  
[Memo, Revised Pandemic Procedures in the Trial Courts, New York State Unified Court System](#)  
(November 13, 2020)  
[Administrative Order AO-68](#) (March 16, 2020)  
[Administrative Order AO-71](#) (March 19, 2020)  
[Administrative Order AO-85](#) (April 8, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.nycourts.gov/index.shtml>

The Chief Administrative Judge of the New York Unified Courts System adopted several procedures and protocols to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak upon the users, visitors, staff, and judicial officers.

As of March 8, 2021, the New York State Unified Courts System planned to resume a limited number of civil and criminal jury trials on March 22. Administrative Judges and court managers are preparing their courthouses for the safe return of jurors and modestly increasing courthouse staffing levels to support necessary in-person administrative functions and increased foot traffic.

Where a party, attorney or other person is unable to meet discovery or other litigation schedules (including dispositive motion deadlines) for reasons related to the coronavirus health emergency, the parties shall use best efforts to postpone proceedings by agreement and stipulation for a period not to exceed 90 days. Absent such agreement, the proceedings shall be deferred until such later date when the court can review the matter and issue appropriate directives.

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Operative Order:**     **[Order of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina](#)**  
(March 15, 2021)  
**[Order of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina](#)**  
(January 14, 2021)

**Relevant Website:**    **<https://www.nccourts.gov/covid-19>**

North Carolina’s courts are a critical governmental function and, as such, are exempt from executive order that limits large gatherings. Continued operation of the court system in light of the current pandemic requires a careful balancing of the needs of public safety, the rule of law, and of collective public health.

All superior court and district court proceedings before the clerks of superior court, have been scheduled or rescheduled for a date after February 14, 2021 unless the proceeding will be conducted remotely.

No jury trials will be conducted in the superior or district court of any county unless the Jury Trial Resumption Plan for that county and relevant trial division has been approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts and entered as a local administrative order.

All persons who are in a court facility are required to wear a face covering while they are in common areas of the facility and when they are interacting with others. A “face covering” means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is simply wrapped around the lower face.

Judicial officials will continue to make use of remote hearing technology to the greatest extent possible to limit in-person appearances. All judicial officials should minimize large gatherings and face-to-face interactions between court personnel and the public to the greatest extent possible.

## [NORTH DAKOTA](#)

**Operative Order:**     [Press Release, North Dakota Courts](#)  
(November 24, 2020)  
[Order 25. Coronavirus Pandemic](#)  
(June 9, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.ndcourts.gov/emergency-order-and-pandemic-response>

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, and as authorized by the law, the Justices of the North Dakota Supreme Court declared a state of emergency statewide for the Judicial Branch.

Criminal and civil jury trials are suspended until further notice unless otherwise ordered by the Court. Specialty courts may resume convening in-person at the discretion of the presiding judge, subject to following the recommended guidelines for social distancing as provided by the North Dakota Department of Health.

County courthouses are limited access to the public.

Unless otherwise ordered, for proceedings suspended under authority of this order the days covered by the judicial emergency are considered legal holidays for time computation under North Dakota's court rules.

## OHIO

- Operative Order:**      [Guidance to Local Courts – COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)  
(March 20, 2020)  
[Standards and Practices Essential to the Resumption of Jury Trials in Ohio: Report and Recommendations](#)  
(May 19, 2020)
- Relevant Website:**      <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/coronavirus/default.aspx>

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Supreme Court of Ohio issued guidance to all local courts for how to ensure continued access to the judiciary while also minimizing COVID-19 transmission to the public, litigants, bar and court staff.

The Supreme Court has not issued an order suspending jury trials and/or in-person court hearings. Instead, the Supreme Court recommends all courts take efforts to minimize physical appearances at court, including through leveraging video conferencing and web-based meeting platforms to conduct arraignments and other pre-trial hearings. The Supreme Court further encourages all courts to provide routine updates to the public on access to the courthouse and case updates via the local court webpage, social media, and via signs posted outside the courthouse.

The Ohio Jury Trial Advisory Group has issues a [document](#) detailing a report and the necessary recommendations for resuming jury trials in Ohio.

Courts possess different capabilities and that every case must be viewed on an individual basis. As the pandemic is a fluid situation, protocols must be revisited regularly.

## OKLAHOMA

**Operative Order:**     [Fourth Emergency Joint Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster](#)  
(November 23, 2020)  
[Third Emergency Joint Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster](#)  
(April 29, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.oscn.net/news/2003171536/covid19-notice>

The Supreme Court of the State of Oklahoma issued a modification of the First and Second Joint Emergency Orders on April 29, 2020. This Order was further modified on November 23, 2020.

The decision to schedule or proceed or continue or reschedule any jury term, Civil or Criminal jury trial, non-jury trial or any other proceeding rests solely with the judges of the District Court.

Judges of the District Courts are authorized to take any and all necessary steps to protect the health and safety of all participants in any court proceeding. Decisions should be made on a courthouse-by-courthouse basis. Decisions should be based upon the number of judges, clerks, and courthouse personnel who are currently under treatment and/or in quarantine due to COVID-19.

Local county officials will continue to guide the extent to which county buildings are closed or have restricted access to the public. All areas of a county facility occupied by judges, judicial staff, court clerks and staff may remain closed to the public with exceptions for necessary and emergency matters and as permitted by local order.

## OREGON

**Operative Order:**     **[Order Imposing Updated Restrictions on Court Operations](#)**  
(March 11, 2021)  
**[In the Matter of Imposing In-Person Restrictions on Court Operations During Statewide “Freeze”](#)**  
(November 18, 2020)  
**[Order Imposing “Level 2” and “Level 3” Restrictions on Court Operations](#)**  
(May 15, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     **<https://www.courts.oregon.gov/courts/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>**

The Chief Justice of Oregon issued an Order on March 16, 2020 as well as an amended Order on March 27, 2020 imposing “Level 3” restrictions on court operations.

Jury trials in civil cases will be conducted in person unless it is possible to be conducted remotely.

Jury trials in criminal cases will be conducted in person unless it is possible to be conducted remotely.

No in-person proceedings will be held unless adequate facilities are available, social distancing requirements can be met, and staffing levels permit. In any in-person proceeding, all judges, staff, and participants must comply with social distancing requirements, protective face covering requirements, and all other safety requirements.

During the period in which social distancing is required, circuit court proceedings will be conducted in the manner specified in this order and local Presiding Judge Orders.

A Presiding Judge has discretion, on a case-by-case basis, to permit any in-person appearance in any particular trial or proceeding upon a determination, after consulting with the parties and other affected persons, that the trial or proceeding cannot feasibly be held entirely by remote means, that it is important that the trial or proceeding not be postponed, and that the trial or proceeding can be held without significant risk to health.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Operative Order:**      [Cessation of Statewide Judicial Emergency After June 1, 2020](#)  
(May 27, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <http://www.pacourts.us/ujs-coronavirus-information>

In light of ongoing public health concerns relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the courts within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania issued various administrative orders to declare local emergencies. Such orders and local emergencies remain in full force and effect, and the Presiding Judges in those judicial districts will continue to exercise emergency powers.

All jury trials are suspended until such time that they can be conducted consistent with prevailing health and safety norms. Local court leaders will assess options for resumption of jury trials.

Local court leaders may also impose limits as to access to courts and in-person court proceedings in order to safeguard the health and safety of court personnel, court users, and members of the public.

## RHODE ISLAND

**Operative Order:**      **Administrative Order 2021-02**  
(March 8, 2021)  
                                 **Administrative Order 2020-08**  
(August 28, 2020)  
                                 **Executive Order: COVID-19 Pandemic Response – Continuity of Operations**  
(May 15, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://www.courts.ri.gov/Courts/SupremeCourt/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>

The Supreme Court of Rhode Island continues to conduct the business of the courts in a manner which limits crowds and encourages social distancing.

Grand jury proceedings can take place in locations that can provide appropriate social distancing and other safety protocols. In-person jury trials are allowed to resume on a limited basis in Providence County, but no jury trial will be scheduled unless the presiding justice provides written authorization that a constitutional, statutory, or other highly critical need exists. The Rhode Island Superior Court has published operational and safety protocols for in-person jury trials.

All courts within the unified judicial system continue to limit in-person hearings to the greatest extent possible. Non-emergency in-person hearings which cannot be conducted remotely may recommence after June 1, 2020 in accordance with the provisions stated in this Order and any additional administrative orders or protocols.



## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Operative Order:**      [Operation of the Trial Courts During the Coronavirus Emergency](#)  
(March 4, 2021)  
[In-Person Proceedings in the Summary Courts](#)  
(January 8, 2021)  
[Circuit Court Jury Trials](#) and [Summary Court Jury Trials](#)  
(December 3, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://www.sccourts.org/coronavirus/covid-19/>

In light of the ongoing increase in COVID-19 cases throughout South Carolina, and the expectation by the medical community and experts that the number of positive cases will continue to increase in the near future, it is prudent to once again make changes to the operations of the summary courts for the protection of those who work within the courts, as well as those who use the courts.

If done in accordance with a plan approved by the Chief Justice, jury selections and jury trials may be conducted.

An in-person trial or hearing will be conducted if a judge determines:

1. It is appropriate to conduct an in-person trial or hearing and
2. The trial or hearing can be safely conducted

The appropriate Chief Judge for Administrative purposes may authorize a non-jury trial to occur if the parties consent or the matter involves an emergency or other circumstance warranting immediate resolution. Hearings must be staggered to minimize the number of people appearing at the same time.

When the courts conduct in-person hearings, the courts will only attorneys, the parties, necessary witnesses, necessary court staff and a limited number of members of the press to appear. Any matter heard in person must be conducted in a reasonably safe manner in accordance with established COVID-19 protocol.

## **SOUTH DAKOTA**

**Operative Order:**      **[Order Declaring Judicial Emergency COVID-19 Disease](#)**  
(March 13, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      **<https://ujs.sd.gov/uploads/news/COVID19UJSProcedures.pdf>**

On March 13, 2020, the South Dakota Supreme Court declared a judicial emergency from the COVID-19 Disease.

This Order granted the Presiding Judges of each of South Dakota’s seven judicial circuits the authority to enter orders to respond to the public health emergency in their respective jurisdictions.

## TENNESSEE

**Operative Order:**     [Order Modifying and Partially Lifting Suspension of In-Person Court Proceedings](#)  
(February 12, 2021)  
[Order Extending State of Emergency, Suspension of Jury Trials, and Suspension of In-Person Court Proceedings](#)  
(January 15, 2021)  
[Order Regarding Face Coverings](#)  
(July 9, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.tncourts.gov/Coronavirus>

On May 26, 2020, the Court extended the state of emergency, but eased the restrictions on in-person court proceedings, including the lifting of the suspension of jury trials, subject to certain enumerated requirements. On July 9, 2020, the Court ordered the mandatory use of face coverings.

The suspension of all in-person court proceedings in all state and local courts in Tennessee, including but not limited to municipal, juvenile, general sessions, trial, and appellate courts, is lifted effective Monday, March 15, 2021.

The suspension of all jury trials remains in effect through the close of business on Wednesday, March 31, 2021, subject only to exceptions which may be granted by the Chief Justice on a case-by-case basis.

The previously approved comprehensive written plans of the respective judicial districts continue in full force and effect.

The Court's July 9, 2020 mandatory face coverings order remains in full force and effect and continues to apply to all persons who enter the courthouse for court-related business.

## TEXAS

**Operative Order:**     **[Thirty-Sixth Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster](#)**  
(March 5, 2021)  
**[Thirty-Third Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster](#)**  
(January 14, 2021)

**Relevant Website:**     **<https://www.txcourts.gov/court-coronavirus-information/emergency-orders/>**

A justice or municipal court will not hold an in-person jury proceeding, including jury selection or a jury trial, prior to June 1, 2021. A district court, statutory or constitutional county court, or statutory probate court will not conduct any in-person jury proceedings aside from those deemed fit by the Court.

Courts may not hold an in-person proceeding contrary to the Office Court Administration’s Guidance, which will be continually updated, regarding social distancing, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions. Prior to holding any in-person proceedings, a court must submit an operating plan that is consistent with the requirements set forth in the Guidance. Courts will continue to use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.

Courts must allow or require anyone involved in any hearing, deposition, or other proceeding of any kind – including, but not limited to, a party, attorney, witness, court reporter, grand juror, or petit juror – to participate remotely, such as by teleconferencing, videoconferencing, or other means.

Existing grand juries may meet remotely or in-person as long as adequate social distancing and other restrictions and precautions are taken to ensure the health and safety of court staff, parties, attorneys, jurors, and the public.

Except for non-binding proceedings, a court may not permit or require a petit juror to appear remotely unless the court ensures that all potential and selected petit jurors have access to technology to participate remotely.

## UTAH

**Operative Order:**     [Administrative Order for Court Operations During Pandemic](#)  
                                  (October 2, 2020)  
                                  [Remote Hearing Requirements and Best Practices](#)  
                                  (January 1, 2021)  
                                  [Emergency General Court Order](#)  
                                  (May 27, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**   <https://www.utcourts.gov/alerts/>

To protect the public and all court participants, the Utah Supreme Court continues to implement a Pandemic Response Plan, assigning each Court a risk phase status that must be followed:

- **Red:** The courts will be in the Red phase whenever the transmission rate of COVID-19 is accelerating.
- **Yellow:** The courts may move to the Yellow phase when the rate of transmission has been consistently decelerating or is stabilized at levels that would not overwhelm the Utah health care system.
- **Green:** Based on the statewide acceleration of COVID-19 cases and the associated risk of overwhelming the Utah health care system, state health officials have recommended that no court transition to the Green phase through at least the end of 2020. Except as specifically outlined in the current administrative order, the Judiciary will follow that recommendation.

The majority of Utah courts remain in the “red” phase, wherein all civil and criminal jury trials are suspended pending further administrative orders. The few courts that are in the “yellow” phase are permitted to proceed with remote or in-person civil or criminal jury trials, subject to public health protocols and other operation requirements.

Individual court statuses are listed under their county. [Click here](#) to find more information.

Absent exigent circumstances, all hearings will be conducted on the papers, or through remote transmission, such as by telephone or video conferencing. If an in-person hearing is necessary, the Court will conduct the hearing consistent with all applicable government and public health precautions.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, most court hearings have been conducted remotely since March 2020. Virtual hearings will be the main method for court attendance until the Pandemic has abated. And after it is safe to conduct in-person hearings, the Court will often use virtual hearings to conduct court business. Because virtual hearings will become part of routine practice, the Court finds it necessary to standardize the processes, requirements, best practices, and expectations for attendance at virtual hearings. Please look at this [Order](#) for more information regarding these practices.

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## VERMONT

**Operative Order:**     **[Declaration of Judicial Emergency and Changes to Court Procedures](#)**  
(March 16, 2021)  
**[Declaration of Judicial Emergency and Changes to Court Procedures](#)**  
(December 22, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    **<https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/about-vermont-judiciary/covid-19-and-court-operations>**

Due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, the Governor of Vermont has declared a state of emergency and has instituted evolving limitations on gatherings in Vermont to promote social distancing, thereby mitigating the risk to the public and limiting the spread of the infection. The Vermont Supreme Court extended the previously declared judicial emergency until May 31, 2021, unless extended by order of the Court.

Superior courts may schedule and hold individual jury trials in criminal proceedings and civil proceedings as of January 1, 2021 with the authorization of the Chief Superior Judge and the Court Administrator.

Factors to be considered in authorizing a proposed jury trial include:

- a. The current course of the COVID-19 pandemic
- b. The current recommendations of public health experts
- c. Whether the unit has adopted a plan that addresses ventilation and air flow and allows for socially distanced seating and movement of all participants and jurors through the course of a jury draw and trial
- d. The availability of staff and other resources to support court proceedings
- e. The rights and interests of the litigants

Judicial Bureau hearings are postponed and remote participation in hearings is encouraged via telephone or videoconferencing. Superior Judges may conduct non-evidentiary hearings in non-emergency matters if all participants participate remotely and are not present in the courthouse.

## VIRGINIA

**Operative Order:**     **In re: Nineteenth Order Extending Declaration of Judicial Emergency in Response to COVID-19 Emergency**  
(March 15, 2021)

**Relevant Website:**    [http://www.courts.state.va.us/news/items/covid/scv\\_emergency\\_orders.pdf](http://www.courts.state.va.us/news/items/covid/scv_emergency_orders.pdf)

On March 16, 2020, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia declared a judicial emergency in all district and circuit courts of the Commonwealth of Virginia. On March 15, 2021, the Supreme Court of Virginia extended the Declaration of Judicial Emergency through April 18, 2021.

No jury trials will occur in any locality in the Commonwealth for the duration of this Order, unless and until the plan applicable to the locality has been approved by the panel.

All courts may hear in-person non-emergency matters and non-jury cases if they determine it is safe to do so, and provided they comply with the guidance for transitioning from emergency to routine operations provided by the Office of the Executive Secretary in order to minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19 from in-person court proceedings.

Courts continue to conduct as much business as possible by means other than in-person court proceedings. In all civil and criminal matters, courts are encouraged to continue and even increase the use of videoconferencing, teleconferencing, email, or other means that do not involve in-person contact.

In all civil cases, including jury trial cases that are currently suspended, deadlines and obligations are not tolled and, upon notice to the parties or their counsel, courts may impose and enforce case related pre-trial deadlines.

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Operative Order:**      [Superior Court of the District of Columbia Order](#)  
(January 13, 2021)  
[Superior Court of the District of Columbia Order](#)  
(November 5, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      <https://www.dccourts.gov/coronavirus>

The Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Supreme Court extended the period of the current judicial emergency surrounding COVID-19.

Until further order, the Criminal Division will not be conducting non-jury or jury trials. Until further order, the Domestic Violence Division will not be conducting non-jury trials. Judges will have the ability to schedule hearings on a case-by-case basis, subject to capacity.

The Court is expanding the types and number of cases it will hear through March 31, 2021. To ensure the safety and well-being of Court staff, counsel, parties and members of the public all case types will be heard remotely, except for the adult arraignment court.

To the extent that a case type has not been identified by this Order, all non-priority matters scheduled through March 31, 2021, will be rescheduled and new dates set. Emergency matters will be heard as scheduled by the court. Presiding Judges will issue additional orders, as necessary, setting forth the matters to be heard.



## WASHINGTON

**Operative Order:**      **[Fifth Revised and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations](#)**  
(February 19, 2021)  
**[In the Matter of Statewide Response by Washington State Courts to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)**  
(June 18, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**      **<https://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/index.cfm?fa=newsinfo.COVID19>**

Due to the health and safety threat posed by COVID-19, the Washington State Supreme Court declared a judicial emergency with limited Court operations as of June 18, 2020, and has since updated this Order.

The previous order suspending all civil jury trials until at least July 6, 2020 is lifted. Trials already in session where a jury has been sworn and social distancing and other public health measures are strictly observed may proceed or, at the discretion of the trial court or agreement of the parties, be continued to a later date. Nonjury trials may be conducted via remote means or in-person with strict observance of social distancing and other public health measures.

Courts have discretion to continue all non-emergency civil matters. However, courts should begin to hear non-emergency civil matters, so long as such matters can appropriately be conducted by telephone, video or other remote means, or in-person with strict observance of social distancing and other public health measures.

## WISCONSIN

**Operative Order:**     [In re: The Matter of the Extension of Orders and Interim Rule Concerning Continuation of Jury Trials, Suspension of Statutory Deadlines for Non-Criminal Jury Trials, and Remote Hearing During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)  
(October 1, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    <https://www.wicourts.gov/covid19.htm>

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to require certain mitigation procedures, including social distancing measures, meant to reduce the increase in person-to-person transmission of the virus. The Supreme Court of Wisconsin issued and extended the judicial emergency presented by COVID-19.

All civil and criminal jury trials as well as other in-person proceedings in each circuit court are continued until that circuit court prepares an operational plan for the safe resumption of in-person proceedings and jury trials and the plan is approved by the chief judge.

## WEST VIRGINIA

**Operative Order:**      [Amendment No. 1 to the May 6, 2020 Resumption of Operations Order](#)  
(October 6, 2020)  
[re: Resumption of Operations](#)  
(May 6, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**    <http://www.courtswv.gov/covid19/COVID19.html>

The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia evaluated the continued need for a judicial emergency in light of ongoing COVID-19 mitigation efforts, and determined that certain court business may resume on May 6, 2020.

In-person hearings or proceedings may commence on or after May 18, 2020.

Grand jury proceedings may commence on or after June 15, 2020.

Jury trials may commence on or after June 29, 2020.

All non-emergency, in-person proceedings previously scheduled between March 23, 2020, and May 15, 2020, are continued until on or after May 18, 2020 as directed by the presiding judicial officer.

The resumption of operations encourages courts adopt the 19 Resumption of Operations Protocols.

## WYOMING

**Operative Order:**     [Eighth Order Amending March 18, 2020 Temporary Plan to Address Health Risks Posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)  
(January 6, 2021)  
[Seventh Order Amending March 18, 2020 Temporary Plan to Address Health Risks Posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)  
(November 13, 2020)

**Relevant Website:**     <https://www.courts.state.wy.us/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>

The Supreme Court of the State of Wyoming extends the judicial emergency surrounding the public health threat posed by coronavirus.

No jury trials will be conducted until further notice.

All other in-person proceedings in all Circuit and District Courts and the Supreme Court in Wyoming will be suspended, except for those set forth below and discussed in this order.

- a. Proceedings necessary to protect constitutional rights of criminal defendants, including bond-related matters for incarcerated individuals; and
- b. Civil and criminal jury trials that are in progress.

Judges are encouraged to use telephonic or video technology for all other statutorily and/or constitutionally required hearings, including arraignments and Title 25 hearings.

All civil trials, hearings, and motions will be postponed and rescheduled for a later date unless the assigned judge finds the proceedings can be held through telephonic or video means and an adequate record can be made by a court reporter or electronic recording.