



For Immediate Release

September 3, 2020

***Summit County Common Pleas Court General Division
Plan for Addressing COVID-19 – Update***

Summit County, Ohio: Judge Amy Corrigan Jones, Administrative Judge of the Summit County Common Pleas Court General Division, announced today in a continued effort to be proactive, the Court has issued an updated Order.

The Order can be found at <https://www.summitpcourt.net/updated-emergency-order-september-3-2020/> and the Policy for Conducting Jury Trials can be found at <https://www.summitpcourt.net/conducting-jury-trials-final-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.

1. All individuals entering the building shall wear a mask and shall wear a mask while present in any courtroom, public space, conference room, or other space that is considered to be confined, as determined by the Administrative Judge. This requirement applies at all times, including, but not limited to, all jury trials. Individuals seeking entrance to the building without a mask will be asked to contact the Court Executive Office by telephone to discuss alternatives to entering the courthouse.

This provision may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.

2. The General Division and all individuals herein shall continue to function under current physical distancing protocols as ordered by the Governor of Ohio and should the Governor order further protective protocols, all individuals within the courthouse shall abide by said protocols, including but not limited to, 6 feet distance separation at all times, including jury trials, with no exceptions. This provision may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
3. Ohio Revised Code § 2945.72 (H) provides in pertinent part that: the time within which an accused must be brought to trial, or, in the case of felony, to preliminary hearing and trial, may be extended ** the period of any reasonable continuance granted other than upon the accused's own motion.

The 9th District Court of Appeals has held that a trial court may continue a trial date without violating a defendant's right to a speedy trial if the purpose and length of the continuance are reasonable. *State v. Brewer*, 2016 Ohio 5366.

The current public health emergency and the aforementioned findings of fact that are referenced and incorporated herein are reasonable for continuances deemed necessary by assigned Judges on a case-by-case basis.

4. All criminal trials are suspended through October 2, 2020, unless a speedy trial violation could occur within fourteen (14) days of the scheduled trial date, however time could be tolled or waived in accordance with the law under any other reasonable circumstance, including but not limited to, Paragraph #3.
 - a. In the event that a criminal trial must proceed, the Policy for Conducting Jury Trials in a Pandemic shall be followed.
 - b. A maximum of forty (40) jurors, unless a number exceeding forty (40) is authorized the Administrative Judge, shall report directly to the Ceremonial Courtroom and all trials will commence in the Ceremonial Courtroom pursuant to the following schedule, with no scheduling modifications:
 - Judge Alison McCarty – Mondays 8:30 a.m.;
 - Judge Mary Margaret Rowlands – Mondays 1:00 p.m.;
 - Judge Christine Croce – Tuesdays 8:30 a.m.;
 - Judge Susan Baker Ross – Tuesdays 1:00 p.m.;
 - Judge Tammy O'Brien – Wednesdays 8:30 a.m.;
 - Judge Alison Breaux – Wednesdays 1:00 p.m.;
 - Judge Joy Malek Oldfield – Thursdays 8:30 a.m.;
 - Judge Kathryn Michael – Thursdays 1:00 p.m.;
 - Judge Amy Corrigall Jones – Fridays 8:30 a.m.;
 - Judge Kelly McLaughlin – Fridays 1:00 p.m.
 - i. Each judge shall have 3 hours to conduct and complete voir dire.
 - ii. The General Division will issue procedures for jury trials and all trials shall be conducted in accordance with the identified procedures.
 - iii. Once the individual judge swears in the jury during her allotted time frame, the individual judge and staff shall direct jurors to her individual courtroom to proceed with the remainder of trial. All protective protocols and orders outlined herein shall be adhered to at all times, with no exceptions, including, but not limited to, masks and 6 feet distance separation at all times, with no exceptions.
 - iv. All General Division areas, courtrooms, restrooms and elevators shall be regularly disinfected immediately prior to and after each voir dire session; after each morning session, regularly between witness testimony and at the end of each daily session.
 - v. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant shall be readily available and accessible in all courtrooms, common areas, restrooms, elevators and any other area utilized by the community.

- vi. The visiting judge courtroom will be designated as a viewing room and all safety protocols referenced herein shall be adhered to at all times.
5. Civil trials may proceed with authorization of the assigned trial judge AND the Administrative Judge. In the event that a civil trial must proceed, the Policy for Conducting Jury Trials in a Pandemic shall be followed. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
6. Sheriff sales may proceed online, unless authorized by the Administrative Judge. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
7. All foreclosures, evictions and any judgment relating to real property may be authorized by the individual assigned judge. This provision may be modified at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
8. All scheduled criminal matters other than those addressed in Paragraph #4 above and incorporated herein, shall continue to be conducted via video/telephone conference, unless the Defendant refuses to waive her/his personal appearance AND the in-person criminal matter is authorized by the Administrative Judge, through October 2, 2020. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
9. All civil matters, including mediations, shall continue to be conducted via video/telephone conference, unless authorized by the Administrative Judge, through October 2, 2020. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
10. Other than outlined above and incorporated herein, no in person appearance shall be conducted by any judge, attorney or party, without prior approval by the Administrative Judge, through October 2, 2020. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.

Corrigall Jones said these actions have been taken as a proactive approach out of concern for the well-being of the employees and public. "In an effort to protect our employees and the public, we will continue to limit the number of people coming into this courthouse," Corrigall Jones said. "The courthouse continues with its daily operations utilizing technology and innovative ideas to still provide access to justice in the General Division.," concluded Corrigall Jones.

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Contact: Susan Sweeney, Assistant Court Executive Officer
ssweeney@cpcourt.summitoh.net 330.643.7840