



For Immediate Release

December 31, 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 Order, extending existing provisions through January 31, 2021.

The Order follows the recommendations of the Supreme Court of Ohio and includes the following:

- Criminal and civil trials may proceed with authorization of the assigned trial judge and the Administrative Judge.
- Each judge will be able to conduct an analysis of the case and work in coordination with the Administrative Judge to protect the integrity of the proceedings and address public safety concerns. Although the language that trials are suspended has been removed, we will still be cautious with the goal of protecting employees and members of the public who are ordered to be present in the General Division.
- All visitation with any inmate at the Summit County Jail shall be conducted via video/telephone conference through January 31, 2021, 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. The General Division is working in coordination with the Summit County Sheriff's office to protect inmates, staff and the public in light of the recent cases of Covid in the Summit County Jail.

The Order in its entirety can be found on the Courts website at <https://www.summitcpcourt.net/>.

1. All individuals entering the building shall be subject to having his/her temperature taken. No one exhibiting signs of illness, including, but not limited to, a temperature of 100.4 degrees shall be admitted or permitted to remain on the premises. This provision may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. 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.

5. All criminal trials are suspended through January 31, 2021, 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.
 - a. In the event that a criminal trial must proceed, a maximum of forty (40) jurors, unless a number exceeding forty (40) is authorized by 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 has issued 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.
 - 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.
6. Other than for trial purposes outlined above and incorporated herein, inmates shall not be transported from the Summit County Jail to the Summit County Courthouse through January 31, 2021, 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 civil trials are suspended through January 31, 2021, 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.
 8. All scheduled criminal matters other than those addressed in Paragraph #5 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 January 31, 2021. 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 January 31, 2021. 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 January 31, 2021. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
 11. All probationers shall report via telephone/video conference, unless authorized by the Administrative Judge, through January 31, 2021. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
 12. Employees will continue the current remote work setting until they are required to report to the courthouse. It is the goal that the remote work setting will be gradually modified, as appropriate.

13. All arraignments shall be conducted via video conference through January 31, 2021, unless:
 - a. As otherwise ordered by the Administrative Judge; or
 - b. As determined by the Administrative Judge as necessary and appropriate; or
 - c. Defendant and counsel have made arrangements as authorized by the Administrative Judge for an alternative hearing.
 - d. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
14. All visitation with any inmate at the Summit County Jail shall be conducted via video/telephone conference through January 31, 2021, 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.
15. 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.
16. All foreclosures, evictions and any judgment relating to real and personal 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.
17. Other than outlined above and incorporated herein, at no time in the General Division shall there be more than 10 individuals in any courtroom, office, conference room, or other space that is considered to be confined, as determined by the Administrative Judge. The only exception shall be for purposes of a Judge's meeting, if approved by a majority of the judges. This provision and timeframe may be modified or extended at any time, if deemed necessary and appropriate to address public safety concerns.
18. This Order supersedes all previously issued orders.
19. The General Division shall continue to have the lawful authority, within constitutional limits, to do and direct to be done all things necessary to ensure the orderly and efficient administration of justice for the duration of the declared public health emergency.

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.

###

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