

## Chesapeake General District Court COVID-19 Updated Operating Schedule

The Supreme Court of Virginia has modified the Order declaring a Judicial Emergency in response to COVID-19 stating that effective May 18, 2020, all courts may hear in-person non-emergency matters 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.

The Chesapeake General District Court will implement the following additional procedures:

The Court will begin hearing non-emergency traffic, criminal and civil cases on May 18, 2020; however, the court will continue to hear fewer cases than normal through June 28, 2020.

Effective immediately and for the duration of the Fifth Order, through June 28, 2020, pursuant to Va. Code § 17.1-330, all residential unlawful detainer actions and the issuance of writs of eviction are suspended and continued.

Virtual mediation is available to all interested parties.

All arraignments and bail hearings for traffic and criminal cases will be held between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. daily via videoconferencing in the criminal courtroom. For any bail hearings not completed by 10:00 a.m., those hearings will be held either at the conclusion of the Circuit Court bail hearing docket or the following business day.

Defendants in custody will appear via videoconference for all pre-trial hearings allowed by statute. Defendants will not be transported from the Chesapeake City Jail to the courthouse unless consent has been given by the Court 48 hours in advance. Inmates housed in other facilities will not be transported until further notice of this court. Attorneys will not be able to meet with inmates in courthouse lockup areas. The Chesapeake City Jail allows attorneys to meet with their clients for confidential communication in person Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Litigants are encouraged to resolve as many pretrial matters as possible with or without the assistance of the courts. If an agreement is reached, Counsel may contact the Court and request an earlier hearing date. To allow time for lengthy or complicated cases, please contact the Court and request additional time on the docket.

Unless authorized by the Court in advance, only parties, witnesses and their attorneys will be permitted in the courtroom. All interested parties will be allowed in the courtroom for bond hearings.

The Court has implemented a liberal continuance policy. If you would like to request a continuance, please contact the clerk's office as soon as possible by telephone, U.S. mail or email.

Effective June 1, 2020, the Magistrate's office will set arraignment hearings for bonded defendant's for July 21, 2020, and each successive court date thereafter, i.e., defendants bonded and released on June 2, 2020 should be set for July 22, 2020. This schedule will continue through the end of August 2020.

All proceedings will be conducted at the counsel tables. Please do not approach the bench.

In order to further minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in addition to recommended social and physical distancing, all persons aged 10 or over entering the courthouse must wear a face covering that covers the nose and mouth. This includes judges, attorneys, deputy sheriffs, court reporters, employees, member of the public, contractors and all others who work in or visit the courthouse. Within a courtroom, the presiding judge may authorize removal of a face mask to facilitate a proceeding. Individuals without a face mask will not be permitted to enter the courthouse except for those who cannot safely wear a face mask because of a health-related condition.

Individuals who have retained counsel and counsel has provided a letter of representation with dates, are not required to appear for arraignment.

If you are ill, caring for someone who is ill, or who are otherwise in a high-risk category, as defined by the CDC, please call the court to request an appropriate accommodation.

The Chesapeake Sheriff's Weekender program is suspended until further notice.

To the extent possible, the court and clerk's office shall remain operational and provide essential services while balancing the health and safety needs of court visitors and personnel.

This order may be modified on a case-by-case basis as circumstances require.

This Updated Operating Order shall be in effect from June 8, 2020 through June 28, 2020.

Effective: June 8, 2020