



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
EATON COUNTY TRIAL COURTS

56<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT  
EATON COUNTY PROBATE COURT  
56A DISTRICT COURT

1045 Independence Blvd.  
Charlotte, MI 48813  
517-543-7500  
www.eatoncounty.org

Hon. Janice K Cunningham  
Chief Judge, Circuit Court Judge

Hon. John D. Maurer  
Circuit Court Judge

Hon. Thomas K. Byerley  
Probate Court Judge

Hon. Julie H. Reincke  
District Court Judge

Hon. Julie A. O'Neill  
District Court Judge

Amy M. Etzel  
Trial Court Administrator

Kathleen M. Brooks  
Deputy Trial Court Administrator

## Administrative Order

C56: 2020-14J, rescind 2020-13J

D56A: 2020-16J, rescind 2020-14J

P23: 2020-14J, rescind 2020-13J

### PLAN TO RETURN TO FULL CAPACITY: PHASE 2 (Amended)

#### IT IS ORDERED:

In accordance with Administrative Order No. 2020-14, effective May 6, 2020, and upon approval of the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the Eaton County Trial Courts, including the 56<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 56A District and Probate Courts began a return to Phase 2 plan on September 8, 2020. The chief judge has been in consultation with the local health department and determined that local health data indicates conditions continue to deteriorate and further restrictions on the courts return to Phase 2 plan are needed as of November 18, 2020. Specifically:

1. The chief judge has confirmed with local health authorities that there is continued evidence of COVID-19 rebound within the local community and additional social distancing measures must be taken based upon a resurgence of infections in the local area.
  2. The chief judge has confirmed with local health authorities that further restrictions on the courts Phase Two planning is warranted at this time.
- A. In order to protect the health and safety of employees and the public, the Eaton County Trial Courts have enacted the following protections:
1. Employees will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms. Employees who feel sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms will not report to work. Employees who feel sick or display symptoms at work will be sent home.<sup>1</sup>
  2. Court employees have been surveyed and those employees who have self-identified as a vulnerable employee and unable to return to work have been offered appropriate accommodations, including the ability to work remotely if their job lends itself to remote work.

<sup>1</sup> Guidance on COVID-19 symptoms is evolving rapidly. The most up-to-date information about symptoms of COVID-19 are available on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

3. Employees will be encouraged to work remotely where feasible to facilitate social distancing among on-site staff.
4. Employees will wear face coverings in court facilities at all times unless 6 ft. social distancing is guaranteed. The courts have taken the following steps to ensure proper social distancing and employee safety:
  - a. Placed physical barriers between workspaces that are not at least six feet apart.
  - b. Marked the floor in common spaces to indicate six-foot intervals.
  - c. Required employees to wear masks while in public spaces.
  - d. Provided PPE for all employees including masks, gloves, spray disinfectant and hand sanitizer.
5. Employees will practice good hygiene through hand washing, frequent disinfecting of used items and surfaces, sneezing or coughing into a tissue or elbow, and avoiding touching their faces.
6. Employees will not travel for non-essential business.
7. Employees are responsible for adhering to the most current guidelines issued by local public health officials or Centers for Disease Control for out of state travel, including any quarantine and/or isolation requirements following their return from travel.
8. Employees have been trained regarding COVID-19. The training included good hygiene practices, updated personnel policies, and safety controls at the court facilities.
9. Court facilities have posted signage emphasizing proper handwashing.
10. Shared equipment will be cleaned and sanitized before and after each use. Examples of shared equipment include copiers, fax machines, and telephones used by more than one employee during a single shift or in consecutive shifts. This equipment should be wiped down with disinfectant or a disinfectant wipe between uses.
11. The court is following the CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting if the facility is exposed to COVID-19.
12. The court has developed a contact tracing policy and will implement contact tracing procedures after receiving notification that the court facility has had confirmed exposure to COVID-19. These procedures will help the court identify and notify individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and will identify exposure locations that need to be cleaned and disinfected pursuant to CDC guidelines.

B. The Eaton County Trial Courts are maintaining the following measures related to public entry into court facilities:

1. The public will be screened or asked to self-screen using posted screening questions prior to entering the court building. Screening questions will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. In the past 24 hours, have you experienced:
- Fever greater than 100.4 °F
  - New or worsening cough (excluding chronic cough due to a known medical condition)
  - Shortness of breath

OR

- b. Do you have at least 2 of the following symptoms:
- Fever
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - New loss of taste or smell
- c. Have you had any close contact in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
- d. Have you traveled internationally in the last 14 days?

Any individual responding “yes” to the screening questions will not be allowed to enter the courthouse. Any individual unable to pass the self-screening will be provided with a telephone number to communicate with the court to ensure they have been afforded an opportunity to file documents or have their proceeding rescheduled remotely or to a future date when they can pass the screening and appear in person. The court must provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to any personnel responsible for in-person screening.

- C. In order to facilitate activity in the courthouse, the courts are using the following measures related to court proceedings and resumption of activities:
1. Proceedings will be conducted virtually to the maximum extent possible, consistent with Administrative Order No. 2020-6.
  2. The Eaton County Trial Courts will be closed to the public with the following exceptions:
    - In-person court proceedings will be limited to essential functions only and include only parties to the case and any individuals who have a constitutional or statutory right to be present. Persons appearing for in-person proceedings must adhere to social distancing requirements and be able to pass the self-screening questions. Face coverings will be required for court in a manner consistent with the SCAO Return to Full Capacity Guide. To ensure all court proceedings remain accessible to the public, livestreaming on YouTube will continue.
    - Individuals may be allowed inside the courthouse to conduct court business by appointment only when alternative methods of conducting court business are unavailable or impractical. Individuals who appear without an appointment will be assisted if space

allows or will be scheduled at a later time. Prior approval by the Chief Judge or Court Administrator must be obtained.

- The ordering and installation of a locked drop box is underway. This will be available inside the front doors of the courthouse for payments and court filings during normal business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00am until 5:00pm. The drop box contents will be processed timely.
  - The Trial Courts have published numerous ways to complete transactions and filings to eliminate the need for individuals to come into the courthouse. Information for each court department, including phone, email and fax can be found at our website: <http://www.eatoncounty.org/160/Eaton-County-Trial-Courts>.
3. Off-site visits with probationers and clients will not take place.
  4. Large venues and common areas in the courthouse (e.g. waiting areas, break rooms, etc.) will not be open for use in a manner that cannot support physical distancing. Members of the public are required to wear facemasks to the extent they can medically tolerate it. They will be provided by the court prior to entry.
  5. Pursuant to MCR 8.110(C), members of the public or staff who refuse to wear required face coverings or adhere to social distancing requirements may be asked to leave the court facility.
  6. Any member of the public who is asked to leave the court facility must be offered an opportunity to conduct court business virtually, attend court proceedings virtually, file documents in an alternative manner, or confer with court administration to determine alternate arrangements for accessing the court.
  7. The Eaton County Trial Courts are in regular consultation with local public health officials to monitor local public health conditions related to COVID-19 and are continuously evaluating data to assess their readiness to proceed to the next phase of court capacity.

Date: 11/16/2020

  
Janice K. Cunningham, Chief Circuit Judge