

CIRCUIT COURT FOR SAINT MARY'S COUNTY
REVISED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 8/03/2020
AMENDING RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESSING AND WITHIN THE COURTHOUSE

WHEREAS the world and its many governments are responding to a novel coronavirus ("SARS-CoV-2") which causes a new disease ("COVID-19");

WHEREAS on March 5, 2020, the Governor declared "that a state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency exists within the entire state of Maryland;"

WHEREAS on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced that the spread of COVID-19 qualified as a pandemic;

WHEREAS on March 12, 2020, the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals issued an order suspending non-essential judicial activities in Maryland's courts, and on March 16, 2020 restricted courts to emergency operations;

WHEREAS, on July 31, 2020 the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals issued an order clarifying COVID-19 Health Measures in Courthouses and Judicial Branch Facilities, effective immediately and for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency period;

WHEREAS it is imperative to protect the health and safety of employees, judges, attorneys, litigants and visitors to the courthouse during emergency operations and for the foreseeable future;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to Rule 16-105(b), it is hereby:

ORDERED, that the following persons shall not enter the Circuit Court premises, without prior permission of the Administrative Judge:

- Persons who have traveled to and from outside the United States in the last fourteen (14) days;
- Persons who have traveled to and from other states outside of Maryland in the last fourteen (14) days and which have been designated as hotspots for the coronavirus at this time as amended by the Maryland Judiciary;
- Court House Staff who have traveled to and from other states outside of Maryland in the last fourteen (14) days and which have been designated as hotspots for the coronavirus at this time as amended by the Maryland Judiciary shall complete and submit to the Court House Screeners the Initial Screening Questionnaire as required by the Maryland Judiciary.
- Persons who reside or have had close contact with someone who has been in another country and/or from another state designated as a hotspot by the Maryland Judiciary, within the last 14 days;

- Persons who have been asked to self-quarantine or self-isolate by any doctor, hospital, or health agency;
- Persons who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or have had contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- Persons who are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. cough, shortness of breath, flu-like symptoms), have a fever;
- A Person who after screening with a contactless thermometer has a temperature of 100 f or higher.
- A visitor or staff to the Court House not wearing face covering. Said face covering to remain in place during entire time in Court House, and it is further

ORDERED, that all individuals over the age of two (2), including judges, judiciary personnel, staff entering or travelling within, the Circuit Court for Saint Mary's County, shall wear a mask or face covering effective 7:00 a.m. on Monday, August 3, 2020, except as noted below; and it is further

ORDERED, that as face coverings need to be able to prevent transmissions of COVID-19, per the recommendation of the Saint Mary's County Health Department, certain types of face coverings will not be appropriate to wear in the Court House. Bandana style, lower necks scarf type and shirts pulled up to cover an individual's mouth are not acceptable. Those with purge valves that do not have a filter are also not acceptable; and it is further

ORDERED, that if your face covering is inappropriate and you are a visitor to the court house, the screeners at the front door will give you a disposable face covering to use and keep, to allow you to enter the building; and it is further

ORDERED, that all face coverings shall be worn with both the individual's mouth and nose completely covered and may not be held to the face by said individual's hand; and it is further

ORDERED, Barriers, including clear personal barrier shields, are not a substitute for masks or face covers and shall not fulfill the masking requirement; and it is further

ORDERED, Social distancing of six feet or more shall be maintained throughout the courthouses and judicial facilities, including offices and courtrooms, but will not be a substitute for the masking requirement;

ORDERED, that with appropriate social distancing, masks or face coverings may be lowered to eat, drink, or take oral or nasal medications, but shall be replaced upon completion;

ORDERED; that Judges, magistrates, court staff, and other occupants of the Courthouse are required to wear face coverings, and are required to practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time in their work areas in the non-public areas of the Courthouse, with the following exception. Where judiciary personnel are assigned to single-occupancy enclosed offices, masks may be lowered when the occupant is alone, and the door is closed; however, masks shall be worn when any other person enters the office, or the occupant leaves the office; and it is further

ORDERED, that where judiciary personnel are assigned to common area workspaces, including cubicles, masks shall always be worn; and it is further

ORDERED, that Judges, magistrates, court staff, litigants, witnesses and other visitors of the Court House shall practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time in each courtroom, and that throughout courtroom proceedings, all participants shall wear masks or face coverings at all times unless, for good cause shown, the presiding judge or magistrate may require any participant, when speaking, to use a disposable mask or wear a personal barrier shield in lieu of a mask to ensure that the participant can be heard, with due consideration given to social distancing and other public health guidelines; and it is further

ORDERED, that witnesses when they enter the witness box are to use the provided sanitizing wipes to wipe the hard surface in the box, and upon finishing testimony re-wipe the witness areas throwing away the wipes in the disposal bin provided before leaving the box; and it is further

ORDERED, that this Order includes all space in the Saint Mary's Circuit Court House, including both public and nonpublic areas; and it is further

ORDERED, that staff is defined as any employee of the Maryland Judiciary, including but not limited to Judges and Magistrates, Office of the State's Attorney, the Register of Wills, and members of St. Mary's County government; and it is further

ORDERED, that staff of the Saint Mary's County Sheriff's Office are exempt from this Order but are to follow the policy established by their Sheriff's Office as to face coverings while operating in the Court House; and it is further

ORDERED, that the Saint Mary's County Sheriff's Office shall deny access to anyone who is not compliant with this Order; and it is further

ORDERED, that any person who does not comply with this emergency order shall be subject to removal from the courthouse; and it is further

ORDERED, that the Sheriff's Office shall post this Order on the doors or within a reasonable area of the doorways and entrances to any courthouse or building used by this Court to conduct business; and it is further

ORDERED, that if you are scheduled or required to appear in the Circuit Court for Saint Mary's County, and you are unable to appear because of the restrictions in this Order, you are directed to proceed as follows:

- If you are represented by an attorney, please contact your attorney;
- If you are an attorney or are unrepresented and you are scheduled to appear in court before a judge, please contact the Saint Mary's Circuit Court Case Management Office at 301/475-7844 ext. 74101.


and it is further

ORDERED, that this Order shall be modified as appropriate; and shall not be construed to prohibit additional health measures that have been or may be adopted in compliance with new or enhanced guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maryland Department of Health, and the Saint Mary's Health Department; and it further

ORDERED, that the Administrative Order 7/28/2020 Restrictions on Accessing Court House, shall be and hereby is rescinded; and it is further

ORDERED, to the extent that this Administrative Order conflicts with extent Administrative Orders of this Court, this Administrative Order shall prevail; and

ORDERED, that the restrictions in this order will remain in place indefinitely, pending further order of this Court.

 8/3/20

Michael J. Stamm, Administrative Judge
Circuit Court for Saint Mary's County