

**Washtenaw County District Courts & Trial  
Court – Plan to Return to Full Capacity –  
Phase Three Forward**

C22 2021-05J, rescinds 2021-04J  
P81 2021-05J, rescinds 2021-04J  
D15 2021-04J, rescinds 2021-03J  
D14A 2021-06J, rescinds 2021-05J  
D-14B 2021-03J rescinds 2021-02J

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Effective Date: May 20, 2021

In accordance with Administrative Order 2020-14, effective May 6, 2020, and upon approval of the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the chief judges of the 15<sup>th</sup> District Court, 14A District Court, 14B District Court, and Washtenaw County Trial Court have consulted with the local health department and determined that gating criteria is satisfied as of May 18, 2021. Specifically:

1. There have been no COVID-19 confirmed or suspected cases in the court facilities within a 14-day period OR Confirmed or suspected cases have occurred in the court facility, but deep cleaning of exposed areas and applicable employee self-quarantine actions have been taken; and,
  2. There is 7-day average of 5% or less for positive tests as a percent of total tests and there is a downward trajectory of documented cases within at least a 14-day period; and,
  3. State and local orders restricting movement and/or requiring shelter-in-place have been rescinded or limited and the SCAO has determined that existing orders would not prevent the court from implementing Phase Three requirements; and,
  4. The chief judges have consulted with health authorities confirming that regional health care facilities are able to treat all patients without crisis care; and,
  5. The chief judges have consulted with health authorities confirming that there is no evidence of COVID-19 rebound within the local community and no need to implement additional social distancing measures based upon a resurgence of infections in the local area.
- A. In order to protect the health and safety of employees and the public, the 15<sup>th</sup> District, 14A District, 14B District, and Washtenaw County Trial Courts have enacted the following protections:
1. Normal staffing will resume at worksites. Some staff may continue to work remotely at least part of the time (this will be adjusted to return to normal, pre-pandemic staffing levels on-site).
  2. Vulnerable employees on temporary leave or working remotely may return to work and practice six-foot physical distancing, wearing masks in a manner consistent with the SCAO [Return to Full Capacity Guide](#). Minimizing exposure to social settings where social distancing is not possible is encouraged.
  3. Personal travel should take into account the necessary travel precautions and employees are fully aware of the potential for quarantine requirements upon return.
  4. Face coverings for employees will be required in a manner consistent with the SCAO [Return to Full Capacity Guide](#). The court has 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 and restricted spaces in the court and at their workstations when physical distance cannot be maintained.
  - d. Employees handling mail will wear masks and practice frequent handwashing (gloves are optional).
  - e. Placed physical barriers at all public-facing service counters and within courtrooms to ensure additional protections for staff and customers.
  - f. Providing PPE for all employees including masks, gloves, spray disinfectant, and hand sanitizer.
  - g. The Washtenaw County District and Trial Courts worked with SCAO and the local health department to make vaccines available for all staff. Over 14 days have passed since staff could have received both the initial and second doses of a vaccine.
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 have been trained regarding COVID-19. The training included good hygiene practices, updated personnel policies, and safety controls at the court facilities.
  7. Court facilities have posted signage emphasizing proper handwashing.
  8. Newly exposed areas (e.g. areas recently opened to the public or returning staff) and shared equipment will be cleaned and sanitized before 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.
  9. The courts are following the CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting if the facility is exposed to COVID-19.
  10. The courts have developed a contact tracing policy and are prepared to implement contact tracing procedures after receiving notification that a court facility has had confirmed exposure to COVID-19. These procedures will help the courts identify 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 15th District, 14A District, 14B District, and Washtenaw County Trial Courts are enacting the following measures related to public entry into court facilities:
1. The public will be 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. Do you have a fever greater than 100.4 degrees? If a touchless/contactless thermometer is available, a temperature check will be completed by court or security personnel.
    - b. Do you have a cough or worsening cough (excluding chronic cough due to known medical reason)?
    - c. Do you have shortness of breath?

OR

    - d. Do you have at least two of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

- e. Have you had any close contact in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and you are not fully vaccinated?
- f. Have you traveled internationally in the last 14 days?

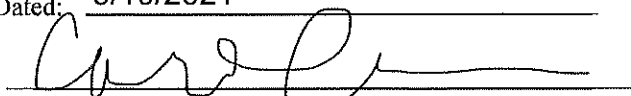
Any individual responding “yes” to the screening questions will not be allowed to enter the courthouse until they can pass the screening questions. Screening personnel will notify the court of any individual that does not make it past screening. The court will accept documents for filing from the person. If the person was scheduled to appear as a party in a court proceeding, the court will work to reschedule the hearing/trial to either a remote proceeding or to a future date when the person may pass courthouse screening. The court must provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to any personnel responsible for in-person screening.

C. In order to facilitate increased activity in the courthouse, the courts are enacting the following measures related to court proceedings:

1. Proceedings will be conducted virtually to the maximum extent possible, consistent with Administrative Order No. 2020-6.
2. In-person court proceedings will be allowed on a limited basis. Courtroom capacity will be limited so that 6 feet of physical distance is maintained, and all members of the public must wear a mask. Capacity may expand if guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is updated.
3. The courts’ decision to require the public to wear masks will take into account any recommendations from the health department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
4. Large venues and common areas in the courthouse (e.g. waiting areas, sit-down dining, etc.) will be open for use limited to six-foot physical distancing. Occupancy limitations are posted for conference rooms and waiting areas will ensure minimum social distancing requirements.
5. Pursuant to MCR 8.110(c), members of the public or staff that refuse to adhere to social distancing requirements or other mitigation procedures 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.

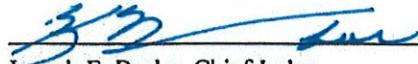
The court is regularly meeting with local public health officials to monitor local public health conditions related to COVID-19 and is continuously evaluating data to assess their readiness to proceed to Phase Four, which is anticipated when a public health announcement is made that COVID-19 has been suppressed within the United States.


Dated: 5/19/2021



Carol Kuhnke, Chief Judge  
Washtenaw County Trial Court  
14A District Court

Dated: 5.19.2021 Hon. Karen Quinlan Valvo, P56974

  
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Joseph F. Burke, Chief Judge  
15<sup>th</sup> District Court

Dated: 5-19-21  
  
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Erane Washington, Chief Judge  
14B District Court