

Circuit Court Judges

Michael P. Hatty, Chief Judge
Circuit and District Courts

L. Suzanne Geddis
Matthew J. McGivney



Livingston County Trial Courts
204 S. HIGHLANDER WAY, HOWELL, MI 48843

Probate Court Judge

Miriam A. Cavanaugh, Chief Judge
Probate Court

District Court Judges

Shauna N. Murphy
Daniel B. Bain

Administrative Order

C44 2021-06J; rescinds C44 2021-05J

D53 2021-03J; rescinds D53 2021-02J

P47 2021-03J; rescinds P47 2021-02J

Plan to Return to Full Capacity – Phase One (Return)

In accordance with the Michigan Supreme Court’s Administrative Order 2020-14, effective May 6, 2020, and upon approval of the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the Chief Judges of the Livingston County Trial Courts have consulted with the local health department and determined that local health data related to COVID-19 necessitates returning to Phase 1 of operations as of April 6, 2021. Specifically:

There is an upward trajectory of documented cases for a 14-day period or an upward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests for a 14-day period, and the COVID-19 test positivity rate is 15 percent or higher.

- A. In order to protect the health and safety of employees and the public, the Livingston 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.¹
 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.
 3. To the extent possible, court employees who can work remotely will be allowed the opportunity to work remotely.
 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:

¹ 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>.

- 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. Required employees handling mail to wear masks and gloves.
 - e. Implemented staggered shifts of employees to reduce crowd size and the risk of people gathering at start and close times.
 - f. Reconfiguration of common staff and public areas to ensure social distancing;
 - g. Employee lunch and break schedules staggered to reduce the number of staff in common areas;
 - h. Employees encouraged to remain in their assigned work areas as much as possible;
 - i. Encouraged use of electronic filing (email and fax) and filing drop-off in secure mail box outside of courthouse to minimize in-person filing; and
 - j. Encouraged use of online payments and payment drop-off in secure mail box located outside of courthouse to minimize in-person payments.
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 nonessential court business.
 7. Quarantine and/or isolation requirements will be implemented consistent with the most current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and/or local public health officials.
 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 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 is prepared to 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 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 Livingston County Trial Courts are maintaining the following measures related to public entry into court facilities:

1. General Public Entry - 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:
 1. Do you have a fever greater than 100.4 degrees?
 2. Do you have a cough or worsening cough (excluding chronic cough due to known medical reason)?
 3. Do you have shortness of breath?
OR
 4. 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
 5. Have you had any close contact in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
 6. 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. Screening personnel will notify Court Administration of any individual who does not pass the screening procedure. If the person came to the court to file documents, the court will accept those documents for filing. If the person was scheduled to appear as a party or witness in a court proceeding, the court will work to reschedule the hearing/trial as 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.

2. Court Filings and Payments - A locked drop box is available outside of the Courthouse for payments and filings to be made at any time. Another drop box is located inside the front doors of the Courthouse for use during normal business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Payments may be made online and filings may be faxed or emailed to the Court.
3. Onsite Court Business – Whenever possible, individuals are encouraged to make an appointment to conduct onsite Court business such as in-person filings and payments. Individuals who appear without an appointment will be assisted if safety protocols can be maintained. Otherwise, an appointment may be scheduled for a later date and time.

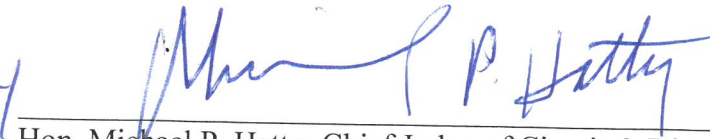
C. In order to facilitate the business of the court, the Livingston County Trial Courts are enacting the following measures related to court proceedings:

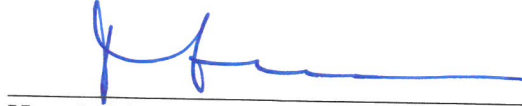
1. Proceedings will be conducted virtually to the maximum extent possible, consistent with Administrative Order No. 2020-6.
2. In-person proceedings are limited to those where there is a statutory or constitutional right that has not been waived, and other such matters as scheduled by the presiding judge.
3. In-person court proceedings will be limited to no more than ten people or any number that ensures six-foot social distancing at all times. Face coverings will be required in court in a manner consistent with the SCAO [Return to Full Capacity Guide](#). Upon request, face masks will be provided by the court prior to entry.
4. Offsite in-person visits with probationers and clients will be discontinued or limited to the greatest extent possible.
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.

The Livingston County Trial Courts are regularly meeting 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.

IT IS SO ORDERED:

Effective Date: April 6, 2021

Date: 4-6-2021 
Hon. Michael P. Hatty, Chief Judge of Circuit & District Court

Date: 4/6/2021 
Hon. Miriam A. Cavanaugh, Chief Judge of Probate Court