Cook County
Resumption of Court Operations and Services Plan

COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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Cook County Court Re-opening Committee

Hon. Timothy Evans, Chief Judge of Cook County Circuit Court
Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle
Clerk of the Circuit Court Dorothy Brown
Public Defender Amy Campanelli
State's Attorney Kimberly Foxx
Sheriff Tom Dart

Members

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Elizabeth Granato
Bilqis Jacobs-El
Jessica Caffrey
Delrice Adams
Ali Abid

Office of the Chief Judge
Stephen Brandt
Michael Carroll
Melanie Lomax
Kate Nolan
Elliott Riebman

Clerk's Office
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Renee Banks
Fred Moody

Public Defender's Office
Aaron Goldstein
Era Laudermilk
Rhonda Berryhill
Rodney Carr
Crystal Gray
Parle Roe-Taylor

State's Attorney Office
Jennifer Ballard
Jennifer Coleman
Joseph Magats
Alyson Miller

Sheriff's Office
Bradley Curry
Adriana Morales
Joseph Bellettiere
Henriette Gratteau

Overview

Led by Chief Judge Timothy Evans, the Circuit Court of Cook County is the largest judicial circuit in the State of Illinois and one of the largest unified court systems in the world. With more than 400 judges and about 2,400 employees, the Circuit Court works closely with other elected officials and stakeholders in the Cook County justice system to ensure the fair and efficient administration of justice for the more than 5.2 million residents of Cook County.

From the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Circuit Court and justice stakeholders have worked diligently to protect public health while maintaining remote court operations and meeting emergency court matters as they arise. In alignment with Illinois Governor JB Pritzker's Stay at Home Order, Chief Judge Evans entered General Administrative Order: No. 2020-01 (GAO 2020-01) on March 13, 2020. GAO 2020-01 limits in-person court operations and implements other measures to protect the health and safety of the public and employees. Chief Judge Evans has issued several extensions of GAO 2020-01, and subsequently issued GAO 2020-02[1]. Effective on July 6, 2020, GAO 2020-02 outlines how the Circuit Court will resume hearing all matters in all Districts and Divisions of the court except for jury trials. To the extent feasible, the Circuit Court will continue to conduct all matters by videoconference whenever possible. During in-person hearings, the Circuit Court will maintain physical distancing requirements and capacity limits for each courtroom.

To coordinate the safe resumption of in-person court operations, the Cook County Court Re-opening Committee ("Committee") was convened and comprised of representatives from each justice stakeholder, including the Office of the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, the Cook County Sheriff's Office, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender. The Cook County Board President's Office and its Bureau of Asset Management provided technical assistance throughout the process and leveraged the expertise of consultants STV-Heery/CBRE Group, Guidepost Solutions LLC and Cushman & Wakefield.

[1]See Appendices for GAO 2020-2.

Overview

Completed over the course of more than a month, this planning process provided an opportunity for the Circuit Court to receive direct input from justice stakeholders on how to safely resume in-person court operations and assure the public that the Circuit Court is prioritizing their health and safety. The Committee was guided by ensuring the rights of the accused, protecting the health and safety of employees and the public and ensuring the fair administration of justice.

The Cook County Resumption of Court Operations & Services Plan expands on GAO 2020-2 and reflects the culmination of the Circuit Court's and the Committee's work to safely resume in-person court operations.

To safely resume court operations, the Circuit Court and its partners have made several significant modifications to facilities and protocols, in accordance with public health guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH). These modifications are further detailed in the following sections, and include requiring everyone in court facilities to wear face coverings, conducting mandatory wellness screenings of everyone who enters a court facility, enforcing capacity limits and requiring everyone maintain a minimum of six feet of physical distance while in court facilities.

The Circuit Court and justice stakeholders will continue to modify this Plan as new information becomes available to ensure the health and safety of all. This guidance will be updated accordingly and made widely available on Cook County justice stakeholders' websites[2].

[2]See Appendices for links to all the Cook County Justice stakeholder offices' websites.

Health & Safety of Court Personnel, Litigants and the Public

Preparing for Court

As the Circuit Court of Cook County resumes in-person court operations on July 6, 2020, judges will continue to conduct most cases via videoconference to limit the number of individuals in court facilities during COVID-19. All litigants should consult with their legal counsel or the Clerk of the Circuit Court for information about whether to appear in-person or instructions for participating in virtual court proceedings when approved by the Circuit Court.

For litigants who are required to appear in-person the Circuit Court will enforce protocols to protect the health and safety of everyone in court facilities. Everyone entering court facilities, including administrative offices, should plan for changes to both the entry process and the functioning of the courtrooms. The Circuit Court encourages everyone coming to court facilities to allow extra time to pass through the wellness screening and security and to follow physical distancing guidelines once inside the facility.

Below is a summary of modifications that have been implemented in all court facilities and more information about each modification is detailed throughout the plan:

Wellness screenings: In addition to the standard security screening required when entering all court facilities, beginning on July 6, 2020, everyone entering a court facility will be subject to a two-part wellness screening. This screening is informed by public health guidance and includes a health survey and a thermal forehead scan to take a surface temperature.

Face coverings: Everyone must wear a face covering in all court facilities. Pursuant to GAO 2020-2, exceptions will be made for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and sign language interpreters. The Department of Facilities Management (DFM) will provide a limited supply of disposable face coverings to people who do not have them and who have a court date or other court business. Once DFM exhausts its supply of face coverings, people who arrive at court facilities without a face covering will be denied entry.

Signage and communication: DFM has posted signs throughout court facilities reminding people of COVID-19 symptoms and to wear face coverings, maintain six feet of physical distance, follow capacity limits and follow proper hand sanitizing[3]. The Circuit Court asks that everyone follow the posted rules to ensure safe conditions for all.

Plan for extra wait time: When you come to a court facility, plan for extra commute times on public transportation and extended wait times upon arrival due to the new wellness screening and longer lines that may form to maintain physical distancing at elevators, escalators and entrances.

If you or someone in your household has been recently diagnosed with, exposed to or experienced any COVID-19 related symptoms such as fever, chills or loss of appetite, please do not come to court even if you have a scheduled in-person hearing. You should immediately notify your attorney, or the Clerk of the Circuit Court if you are a self-represented litigant, that you are unable to appear. Your attorney may request that your hearing be conducted via videoconferencing or rescheduled. If you come to court while exhibiting symptoms, you will be denied entry if you do not pass the wellness screening.

[3]See Appendices for examples of signs posted throughout the court facilities.

Health & Safety of Court Personnel, Litigants and the Public

Entering Court Facilities

Upon arrival to court, everyone seeking entry will be directed to the line to enter the building. These lines have distinct markers indicating where to stand to maintain at least six feet of physical distancing. To help with this process, signs have been posted throughout each facility and County personnel will be on-hand to provide direction. To enter a court facility, everyone will be required to complete a two-part wellness screening informed by public health guidance from the CDC, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and CCDPH.

The two-part wellness screening includes a short health survey and a thermal forehead scan to take a surface temperature[5]. If an individual has a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit in the initial thermal scan, a second temperature screening using a non-contact infrared thermometer will be required. The Sheriff's Office will deny entry to anyone who does not pass the wellness screening, wear a face covering or follow the required entry procedures.

All individuals who are denied entry to a court facility will be provided a denial receipt with the facility name, phone numbers to call for further assistance and reason for denial[6]. Anyone who receives a denial receipt should keep it for their records. If a litigant is denied entry to a court facility, the Sheriff's Office will send the litigant's name to the courtroom where they were scheduled to appear, and their presence will be excused. All litigants who are denied entry to a court facility should immediately follow up with their attorney. Self-represented litigants should call the Clerk of the Circuit Court to confirm their next court date[7]. The Clerk of the Circuit Court's Office will also send a postcard to the litigant's address with the rescheduled court date information. Employees who are denied entry should follow up with their work location as soon as possible and submit their denial receipt if requested by their manager or supervisor.

[5]See Appendices for screening questions.
[6]See Appendices for denial receipt.
[7]See Appendices for Clerk of the Circuit Court flyer and Automated Court Reminder System.

Health & Safety of Court Personnel, Litigants and the Public

Maintaining Safety within Court Facilities

- **Lines:** In anticipation of lines forming near elevators and in lobbies, facility managers will place decals indicating where to stand while waiting for the elevator. The Sheriff's Office or security personnel will also be present in lobbies to assist with line management. Please allow for additional time to arrive at the courtroom due to longer lines.
- **Elevator capacity limits:** Signs listing elevator capacity limits are posted throughout the facilities and in elevators in accordance with public health guidelines. Personnel will manage both lining up and boarding to ensure elevator capacity limits are followed.
- **Physical distancing:** Current guidance from CDC and local public health authorities encourage all individuals to practice physical distancing by maintaining a minimum of six feet between themselves and others. Everyone is required to practice physical distancing in all court facilities. All facilities have posted a maximum capacity, including in queueing and screening areas, entrances, concourses, corridors, lobbies, office areas and restrooms. Please be patient and vigilant by maintaining at least six feet of physical distance between others. Failure to do so may result in being asked to leave the facility.

Cleaning and Maintaining Court Facilities

- **Heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) and air circulation:** All facilities have increased air ventilation and will continue to follow all OSHA and CDC guidelines to maintain appropriate air quality throughout the facilities to ensure a safe return.
- **Plastic barriers:** Plastic barriers, or sneeze guards, have been installed in all courtrooms that will be occupied beginning July 6 and in all public-facing counters within court facilities.
- **Frequent cleaning of high touch areas:** Cook County has increased custodial staffing across its facilities to increase COVID-19 sanitation. In all facilities, custodial staff will frequently clean and disinfect bathrooms, common areas, courtrooms and frequently touched areas like elevator buttons, light switches, handrails, doorknobs, countertops of information desks and handles on toilets and sinks. Custodial staff will also perform regular bathroom checks and stock and clean each bathroom every two hours. Custodial staff will also increase the frequency of sanitizing floors and counters.

Health & Safety of Court Personnel, Litigants and the Public

Reconfiguring Courtrooms

- **Capacity limits:** To promote the health and safety of everyone in the courtroom, the Circuit Court will impose capacity limits within each courtroom. The Bureau of Asset Management has analyzed each courtroom and assigned capacity limits in accordance with public health guidance and will post signs detailing the maximum number of people that can be in each courtroom at any given time. To allow for greater physical distancing, anyone coming to court should plan to limit the number of people accompanying them.
- **Signs:** In addition to plastic barriers and increased cleaning protocols, clear markings will be posted on floors and seating areas to designate the appropriate place to sit or stand while in the courtroom.

Below is an example of a reconfigured courtroom ready for in-person hearings:

Court Administration and Management of Court Calls

During this pandemic, the Circuit Court of Cook County expanded the use of technology to limit the number of individuals at court facilities. Videoconferencing allows the court to continue conducting court proceedings, including emergency matters, subject to the voluntary waiver of an appearance by the litigant.

As in-person operations resume on July 6, the Circuit Court will continue to use videoconferencing unless an in-person hearing is necessary as determined by the judge and parties to the case. In cases where a litigant or party to the case appears in-person, the Circuit Court will conduct the hearing with capacity limits and physical distancing requirements.

In addition to implementing capacity limits and physical distancing requirements for each courtroom, the Circuit Court has implemented additional administrative measures to ensure everyone can maintain physical distancing within each courtroom. These measures include, but are not limited to, reducing the number of status dates or conducting some via videoconference, excusing victims, witnesses and law enforcement personnel whose appearances are not required and scheduling staggered court calls for all in-person hearings by floor and courtroom.

Further information on courtroom operations can be found in GAO 2020-02.

Jury Management

Prospective jurors will follow the guidelines established for everyone entering a court facility including:

- All potential jurors will be subject to security and a wellness screening.
- All potential jurors must wear face coverings. If a potential juror does not have a face covering, one will be provided based on availability.

The Circuit Court has reconfigured jury assembly rooms to accommodate six feet of physical distancing. Custodial staff will clean jury assembly rooms on the same schedule as courtrooms and other common areas.

Remote Video/Telephonic Hearings/Live Streaming

As mentioned above, during the Circuit Court's closure due to COVID-19, judges have conducted some hearings via videoconference, particularly emergency matters such as bond court hearings. To preserve the public nature of these hearings, the Circuit Court has livestreamed court proceedings on YouTube. As the Circuit Court re-opens, it will continue and expand this practice to ensure that the public and media can observe all court hearings. Guidelines for virtual courtroom proceedings and links to the livestreams can be found at www.CookCountyCourt.org.

Court & Administrative Services

- Remote payment of bonds: The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County is working to enable remote payment of bonds. When this option is available, the Clerk and other justice partners will broadly publicize this procedure.
- Court help desks and the Court Resource Center: Court help desks and the Court Resource Center are operating remotely.
- Law Library: The Cook County Law Library satellite branches (Bridgeview, Criminal Courts, Markham, Maywood and Skokie) will be open for their normal hours of operation. The Daley Center main library will be open from 8:30am-4:30pm. To protect staff and patron safety, the Law Library is reducing maximum patron capacity, reconfiguring furniture to maintain a minimum of six feet distance between patrons, installing protective shields, minimizing public access to print resources and enhancing safety and sanitization procedures for public terminals.

Conclusion

In collaboration with justice stakeholders, the Circuit Court of Cook County is committed to creating an environment that allows for the safe resumption of court operations and services. This Plan has been informed by public health guidance to assure the public and employees that the Circuit Court is making every effort to prepare court facilities for a safe and gradual resumption. As further public health guidance becomes available, the Cook County Court Re-opening Committee will review and revise this Plan as needed.

Appendix

Relevant Contact Information

Clerk of the Circuit Court

www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org

Office of the Chief Judge

www.cookcountycourt.org

Public Defender

www.cookcountypublicdefender.org

State's Attorney

www.cookcountystatesattorney.org

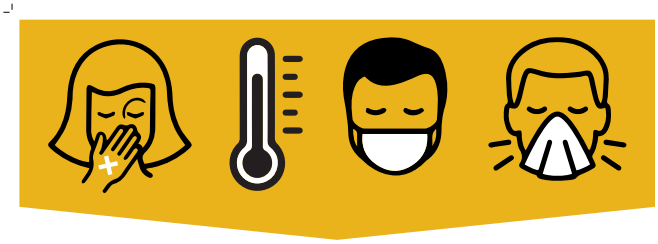
Sheriff

www.cookcountysheriff.org

Wellness Screening Health Survey

Questions

1. **COUGH?** Have you developed a NEW cough recently?
2. **FEVER?** Do you feel feverish or have chills?
3. **BREATHING?** Have you been experiencing NEW difficulty breathing or a shortness of breath?
4. **PAIN?** Are you experiencing NEW muscle aches?
5. **TASTE OR SMELL?** Have you noticed a NEW loss of taste or loss of smell recently?
6. **SORE THROAT?** Have you recently developed a NEW sore throat?
7. **TESTED POSITIVE?** Have you tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?



PREGUNTAS DE ENTRADA

¿TOS?
¿Has desarrollado una NUEVA tos recientemente?

¿FIEBRE?
¿Te sientes febril?

¿RESPIRACIÓN?
¿Has estado experimentando NUEVA dificultad para respirar o dificultad para respirar?

¿DOLOR?
¿Estás experimentando NUEVOS dolores musculares?

¿SABOR O OLOR?
¿Has notado una NUEVA pérdida de sabor o pérdida de olor recientemente?

¿HOGAR?
¿Hay alguien en su hogar que presente alguno de los síntomas que acabo de preguntar?

¿PRUEBA POSITIVA?
Hasta donde pueda saber, ¿tiene usted o cualquier persona en su hogar entrar en contacto estrecho con alguien que ha dado positivo en COVID-19?

General Administrative Orders

GAO 2020-01 PDF

GAO 2020-02 PDF

Denial Receipt

You have been denied access to the Cook County Building because your temperature registered above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or you indicated that you were experiencing COVID-like symptoms, were exposed to COVID-19, or were uncooperative.

You should visit Chicago.gov/coronavirus or contact the Chicago Department of Public Health at 312-746-4835 for detailed information about what to do next.

By law in Chicago, you must stay home if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID except to get medical care.

Please present this document, as necessary, for proof of denial of entry to the Cook County Building on this date_____.

The entrant _____sought to enter the Cook County building but the entrant did not meet the building access criteria.

Please contact the Cook County Entity or tenant office for which you sought admission.

See reverse side for phone numbers.

Completed by _____.

Note: Please contact your health care provider. You should not return to this facility or other public settings until your health care provider advises you it is safe to do so.

• Reason for Denial Code: _____ • Form Issues: _____

CODES 1= Yes to any wellness question(s); 2= Thermal Scanning at or above 100.4; 3= Uncooperative

Signage

PHYSICAL DISTANCING
6’
MANTENGA LA DISTANCIA
PROTÉJASE

Face coverings are to be worn at all times while in facility.

Personal Hygiene Tips
Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
If you are unable to wash your hands with soap and water, use antibacterial gel with 70% alcohol.
When sneezing or coughing, cover your nose and mouth with the inner angle of your arm or with a disposable handkerchief.
Don’t touch your face, including your mouth, ears, eyes and nose.
Help STOP cross-contamination.

Clerk of the Circuit Court Flyer

DOROTHY BROWN
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

ATTENTION
GET YOUR COURT DATE BY TEXT OR EMAIL

SEND A TEXT MESSAGE to *one* of the phone numbers listed below for the appropriate division, district or department to request your next court date. Text your case number, or, if you do not have your case number, text the Plaintiff or Defendant's name for civil case types, or the Defendant's name and birthdate for a criminal case.

SEND AN EMAIL MESSAGE to the email address listed below for the appropriate division, district or department to request your next court date. Email your case number, or, if you do not have your case number, email the Plaintiff or Defendant's name for civil case types, or the Defendant's name and birthdate for a criminal case.

CHANCERY DIVISION
TEXT: (773) 350-3162 or (773) 350-3163
EMAIL:
ChanCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

CIVIL DIVISION
TEXT: (773) 350-2601 or (773) 350-2602
or (773) 350-3205
EMAIL:CivCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

CHILD PROTECTION/ JUVENILE JUSTICE DIVISION
TEXT: (773) 350-3175 or (773) 350-3174
EMAIL:CPJJCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

COUNTY DIVISION
TEXT: (773) 350-3154 or (773) 350-3153
EMAIL:CntyCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

CRIMINAL DIVISION
TEXT: (773) 350-3166 or (773) 350-3167
EMAIL:
CrimFelCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

CRIMINAL DEPARTMENT
TEXT: (773) 350-3171 or (773) 350-3172
EMAIL:
CrimMisdCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

DOMESTIC RELATIONS/ CHILD SUPPORT DIVISION
TEXT: (773) 350-3160 or (773) 350-3161
or (773) 350-3207
EMAIL: DRCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com
OR: ChildSupCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
TEXT: (773) 350-3202 or (773) 350-3206
EMAIL: DVCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

LAW DIVISION
TEXT: (773) 350-3165 or (773) 350-3164
EMAIL:
LawCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

PROBATE DIVISION
TEXT: (773) 350-3159 or (773) 350-3155
EMAIL:
ProbCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

TRAFFIC DIVISION
(CHICAGO CASES ONLY)
TEXT: (773) 350-3149 or (773) 350-2614
EMAIL:
TrafCourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

ALL SUBURBAN CASE TYPES DISTRICT 2 - SKOKIE
TEXT: (773) 350-3177 or (773) 350-3176
EMAIL: D2CourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

DISTRICT 3 – ROLLING MEADOWS
TEXT: (773) 350-3182 or (773) 350-3181
EMAIL: D3CourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

DISTRICT 4 - MAYWOOD
TEXT: (773) 350-3183 or (773) 350-3189
EMAIL: D4CourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

DISTRICT 5 - BRIDGEVIEW
TEXT: (773) 350-3191 or (773) 350-3190
EMAIL: D5CourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

DISTRICT 6 - MARKHAM
TEXT: (773) 350-3201 or (773) 350-3200
EMAIL: D6CourtDate@cookcountycourt.com

GENERAL INFO, CALL (312) 603-5030
COOKCOUNTYCLERKOFCOURT.ORG

Postponement of many criminal and civil cases in the Circuit Court of Cook County extended beyond July 6. For more information, visit Cook County Circuit Court website: www.cookcountycourt.org

Cook County Court Reminder System

Upcoming court date?

Give your phone number to your attorney, police department staff, or pretrial service officer to receive voice and/or text message reminders of:

- ✓ Court Date
- ✓ Court Time
- ✓ Court Location

Or visit our website to register yourself:

https://courtreminder.cookcountyil.gov

*** The SERVICE IS FREE, although message rates may apply.

Court Reminder System

Sistema Recordatorio de la Corte del Condado de Cook

¿Tiene una fecha de corte próxima?

Dé su número de teléfono a su abogado, al personal del Departamento de Policía o al Oficial de Servicios Preliminares para recibir recordatorios de voz y/o mensajes de texto tocante a su próxima:

- ✓ **Fecha de corte**
- ✓ **Tiempo de corte**
- ✓ **Ubicación de la corte**

o visite nuestro sitio de internet para registrarse:

https://courtreminder.cookcountyil.gov

*** Este SERVICIO ES GRATUITO, aunque podrían aplicarse tarifas por los mensajes.

SYSTEM POWIADOMIEŃ W SADZIE OKREGOWYM POWIATU COOK

MASZ ZBLIŻAJĄCY SIĘ TERMIN SPRAWY SĄDOWEJ?

PODAJ SWÓJ NUMER TELEFONU TWOJEMU ADWOKATOWI, DYŻURNEMU POLICJANTOWI NA POSTERUNKU POLICJI, BĄDŹ TWOJEMU KURATOROWI SĄDOWEMU, ŻEBY OTRZYMYWAĆ WIADOMOŚĆ GŁOSOWĄ I/LUB WIADOMOŚĆ SMS INFORMUJĄCĄ O:

- ✓ **DACIE ROZPRAWY SĄDOWEJ**
- ✓ **GODZINIE ROZPRAWY SĄDOWEJ**
- ✓ **ADRESIE SĄDU**

MOŻESZ TEŻ SAMODZIELNIE ZAREJESTROWAĆ SIE NA NASZEJ STRONĘ INTERNETOWEJ :

*** **USŁUGA JEST BEZPŁATNA, ale moga obowiązywać stawki za połączenie glosowe lub przesyłanie wiadomości sms.**

Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County Board President

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