



Supreme Court State of Tennessee

CHIEF JUSTICE
JEFFREY S. BIVINS

JUSTICES
CORNELIA A. CLARK
SHARON G. LEE
HOLLY KIRBY
ROGER A. PAGE

401 SEVENTH AVENUE NORTH
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
37219

MEMORANDUM

TO: Judge Don Parish, presiding judge 24th judicial district

DATE: May 4, 2020

RE: 24th Judicial District Re-Opening Plan

On April 30, 2020, the Tennessee Supreme Court received the 24th Judicial District Re-Opening Plan. Please revise your plan and address the following:

- (1) The number of persons in a courtroom at any given time should not exceed 10, plus the judge, court personnel, and court security.
- (2) Please provide more detail on plans for access to the respective buildings where court will be held, any health screening that will take place, how social distancing will be handled both in and outside the courtroom, how witnesses will be handled, and cleaning arrangements for the courthouses and buildings.
- (3) Please address whether the general sessions, juvenile, and municipal courts will be operating in any different manner from the trial courts.

Review of the other approved plans posted on the website should be very helpful.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF TENNESSEE
FOR BENTON, CARROLL, DECATUR, HARDIN AND HENRY COUNTIES
TWENTY-FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

**PLAN FOR THE CONDUCT OF IN-PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS FOR
NON-EMERGENCY MATTERS IN THE 24TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF
TENNESSEE REGARDING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Pursuant to the *Order Modifying Suspension Of In-Person Court Proceedings And Further Extension Of Deadlines* filed April 24, 2020, by the Tennessee Supreme Court, all state and local Courts operating in the 24th judicial district will use their best effort to comply with that order in that:

- 1) Jury trials are suspended through July 3, 2020.
- 2) If feasible, courts will conduct proceedings by means other than in-person if this may be done so as to preserve the rights of the parties.
- 3) Admission into the place of the in-court hearing may be limited to those persons necessary to conduct a fair and safe hearing.
- 4) Hearing times may be staggered to individuals or groups of cases.
- 5) Care will be taken to manage social distancing in the place of the hearing as to witnesses, court staff and security personnel.
- 6) An inability to conduct proceedings in accord with this order/plan constitutes good cause for continuing the matter.
- 7) Courts are expected to prioritize cases which require a hearing.
- 8) Courts will encourage the resolution of cases by settlement.
- 9) Courts may order those in attendance to wear a mask or avail themselves of hand sanitizer, if available.

- 10) Each judge presiding shall liberally interpret this plan using appropriate discretion in order to fairly adjudicate cases and manage the docket.
- 11) In the event of uncertainty as to the application of a procedure set forth in this plan as compared to the *Order* of the Supreme Court dated March 25 2020, the latter shall govern.
- 12) Judges and court clerks will keep official direct in-person contact to a minimum. However, the court clerks will maintain the ability for the conduct of necessary business.

Adopted this 30th day of April, 2020.

Donald E. Parish
Presiding Judge