

**Joint Administrative Order from the Circuit Court for Prince George's County
and the 5th District Court of Maryland**

WHEREAS, due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, an emergency exists; and

WHEREAS, the administration of justice necessarily has been affected by the pandemic and will continue to require the professionalism, courtesy, and cooperation of the members of the bench, the bar and judiciary staff in navigating the changes to practices and procedures; and

WHEREAS, remote hearings have proved to be useful and effective in facilitating the Courts' performance of core functions during the COVID-19 emergency and may continue; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 continues to require the Courts in Prince George's County to monitor the current phase of operations in the phased approach, moving toward full operational functions, while employing safety measures and monitoring local health conditions to continue to support the health and safety of the residents of Prince George's County and the Judiciary personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Court of Appeals Amended Administrative Order on the Progressive Resumption of Full Function of Judiciary Operations Previously Restricted Due to the COVID-19 Emergency, filed June 3, 2020, provided for five phases of a progressive return to operations; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive of Prince George's County issued Executive Order No. 2-2022 on February 25, 2022, terminating the Mask Mandate in Public Places in Prince George's County effective February 28, 2022; and

WHEREAS, infection rates have now fallen across the state allowing for the return to operations in Phase V. The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, Joseph M. Getty has issued the Fifth Amended Administrative Order (March 1, 2022) further clarifying the Phase V reopening of the Courts in Maryland, while authorizing all courts effective March 7, 2022 to: require the wearing of face masks and mandate social distancing to be voluntary under certain circumstances as defined in said Order, and directing the Administrative Judges of the Circuit Court and the District Court located in each county to determine together whether they will require social distancing or other health measures consistent with local conditions and pursuant to appropriate public health guidance and shall so advise the public and members of the bar by way of administrative orders to be effective March 7, 2022; and

WHEREAS, after consultation with Dr. Ernest Carter, Health Officer for Prince George's County, Maryland, the Administrative Judges of the Circuit and District Courts of this County have determined that some COVID-19 restrictions can be relaxed as we proceed into the Phase V reopening subject to the limitations contained in this Order, as the infection rate of COVID-19 in Prince George's County has been significantly reduced; and under consideration of the above and for good cause shown,

It is this 4th day of March 2022, hereby

ORDERED, that effective March 7, 2022, pending further order of the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals or the Administrative Judges for the Circuit Court for Prince George's County and the 5th District Court of Maryland, temperature checks and written/electronic health screening questionnaires will no longer be required when entering either the Circuit or District Courts in Prince George's County, Maryland; and it is further,

ORDERED, the social distancing requirements shall be relaxed, but the Circuit Court and the District Court may require continued restrictions to limit the concentration of individuals and allow social distancing as necessary; and it is further

ORDERED, to achieve social distancing for large congregate settings, the Administrative Judges may limit, temporarily, the number of people entering the Courthouse or a courtroom to the extent necessary. The Courts shall be open to the public, and no appointment shall be necessary for access; however, notices shall specify that appointments may be preferred for some services, and that access to courtrooms and other Court spaces may be limited on an intermittent basis; and it is further,

ORDERED, that masks shall not be mandated but shall be strongly encouraged in the Courthouses in Prince George's County, Maryland; and it is further

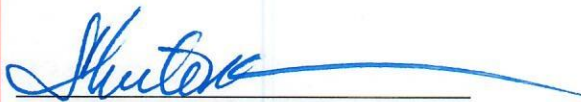
ORDERED, that self-screening questions shall be posted on the exterior of the Courthouses in Prince George's County and the Office of the Sheriff, at the discretion of the Administrative Judges of the Circuit Court and District Court, may restrict access to any person who may self-assert symptoms of the COVID-19 virus; and it is further,

ORDERED, that if a citizen, staff or member of the bar is denied entry based on the self-assessment screening protocol, they shall be provided with information to contact the Court regarding alternative means to address the purpose of their intended visit to the Court; and it is further,

ORDERED, that the Sheriff's Office and/or the Bailiffs shall DENY entry to and/or remove any individual who refuses to comply with or violates this Order; and it is further,

ORDERED, that this Administrative Order shall be posted at the entrance of the Courthouses, on the website for the Circuit Court for Prince George's County and the 5th District Court of Maryland, and provided to the Prince George's County Bar Association and other Specialty Bar Associations in the County for distribution to their members; and, it is further,

ORDERED, that this Order shall become effective on March 7, 2022, at 7:00am and shall remain in effect until further Order of this Court.



Sheila R. Tillerson Adams
Chief and Administrative Judge
Circuit Court for Prince George's County



Lisa A. Hall Johnson
Administrative Judge
5th District Court of Maryland