



COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF DELAWARE COUNTY, OHIO  
DELAWARE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
117 NORTH UNION STREET, LEVEL 500  
DELAWARE, OHIO 43015

DAVID M. GORMLEY, JUDGE  
JAMES P. SCHUCK, JUDGE

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### **Summer 2020 Update:** **Court Operations in the General Division**

The General Division of the Court of Common Pleas of Delaware County is now welcoming parties, attorneys, witnesses, and visitors for in-person hearings at the courthouse. We are also, though, continuing to offer any of those persons the option to participate in our hearings through the Zoom videoconferencing platform. In other words, everyone is welcome to come to the courthouse now, but no one is being forced to come.

#### **For those attending hearings in person . . .**

At the courthouse, we have sought the advice of the county health department and have implemented several measures to protect everyone in the building.

- Court staff members are wearing masks in the courtroom.
- Hand sanitizer is readily available at the courthouse entrance and elsewhere in the building.
- Restrooms are available throughout the courthouse, and all of them are well-stocked with plenty of soap.
- The courthouse is being cleaned and disinfected multiple times every day.
- We are cleaning courtroom tables and the witness chair after each use throughout the day.
- Court staff members are monitoring their health daily, and they are not permitted to come to the courthouse if they are ill.
- All persons in the courthouse are expected to stay at least six feet away from others while in the building.

You are welcome to wear a mask or other face covering when you come to the courthouse. Building-security officers on the first floor or our staff on the fifth floor can supply a mask to you if you would like. Just ask.

If you are feeling ill, please stay home rather than coming to the courthouse.

To lessen the number of objects that the building-security officers might need to touch as part of the screening process at the public entrance on the first floor, try to avoid bringing unnecessary items with you when you visit the courthouse.

We understand that private discussions between attorneys and their clients in the courtroom can be difficult to conduct from a distance. We will do our best to accommodate any attorney who would like, in the midst of a hearing, to step out of the courtroom to hold a private discussion with a client from a safer distance than might be possible in the courtroom. Attorneys and clients are also permitted to text each other from a safe distance during our hearings rather than whispering at close range.

### **For those participating in hearings through the Zoom online platform . . .**

Attorneys, parties, and others who would like to participate in our hearings on Zoom rather than in person may do so. Information about that videoconferencing option is available on the court's website at this link:

<https://commonpleas.co.delaware.oh.us/video-conference-proceedings/>

In criminal cases, we cannot conduct a hearing on video unless the defendant consents to that format. Any defense attorney whose client wants to participate in a hearing with us through Zoom should ensure before the hearing that the defendant understands that he or she is entitled to attend the hearing in person and that the judge or magistrate will ask at the start of the hearing whether the defendant consents to participate in the hearing on Zoom.

We ask, too, that all attorneys, parties, or others who want to participate in our hearings through Zoom ensure that their electronic devices are adequate, that all participants understand how to connect to a videoconference with us, and that everyone has signed in and is ready to go at the scheduled starting time for each hearing.

A court laptop computer is available at the courthouse for the use of any parties or attorneys who would like to participate in any hearing through Zoom but who are unable to connect to that online platform on their own cellphone or other electronic device. The laptop is in a small meeting room in the public hallway on the fifth floor of the courthouse. Please contact us before the date of your hearing if you want to reserve the laptop at your scheduled hearing time, and make sure that you arrive at the courthouse in plenty of time to sign on to Zoom before your hearing's starting time.

The Zoom web addresses and Zoom meeting ID numbers listed on our court's website for each of our courtrooms do not change from day to day or hearing to hearing. Please print out or save that information if you will be participating in multiple hearings with us on Zoom.

We expect the same decorum and courtesy on our Zoom hearings as we expect in the courtrooms themselves. Appropriate attire, courteous language, and respect for others' time are appreciated whether you are participating in a hearing in the courtroom or on Zoom.

We are not able to conduct jury trials in criminal cases on Zoom, so parties, attorneys, and witnesses for those trials are required to attend in person.

### **Presenting evidence on Zoom . . .**

For any hearings at which you intend to offer exhibits, you should save your documentary exhibits in a digital format so that they can be displayed through Zoom's "share screen" function with any parties or attorneys who participate in the hearing on Zoom. Before your hearing, save any digital-format exhibits with appropriate file names – such as State's Exhibit 1 or Defendant's Exhibit A – and notify court staff, who can provide you with a link to an online site where you can upload and share your exhibits. Please feel free to reach out to court staff before your hearing if you want to learn more about presenting your evidence through Zoom.

### **Court documents can be filed and viewed electronically . . .**

Remember that nearly all documents in civil and criminal cases in the General Division can be filed electronically through the Clerk's e-filing system, and most documents in our cases can be viewed online for free on the Clerk's website. Contact the Clerk's office at 740-833-2500 if you have questions about e-filing or about viewing documents online.

And of course documents sent to the Clerk by fax, by regular mail, or through commercial delivery services can be filed in all cases in the General Division. Check the Clerk's website for information about all filing options in her office:

<https://clerkofcourts.co.delaware.oh.us/>

### **Access to our offices . . .**

For those who need to visit us or our staff in our office workspace – as opposed to the courtrooms – we have placed in the fifth-floor public hallway a phone that you can use to reach us. We ask that you use that phone – or your own cellphone, of course – to call us if you are on our floor and feel that you must speak with us or our staff.

In that same area in the fifth-floor hallway, we have placed a drop box where you can leave documents for us. We are checking that box at least twice each day.

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We remain committed to protecting both public health and equal access to justice as we navigate the challenges posed by the coronavirus. Please contact our offices about any virus-related questions or concerns.

David M. Gormley  
James P. Schuck