

Emergency General Sessions Court Procedure
Adopted by the General Sessions Court Judges
on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 3:00 P.M.

I. COURT SESSIONS

1. In an effort to reduce the number of persons in the A.A. Birch Building, the transportation of prisoners, and exposure to the C-virus, the following plan has been adopted unanimously by the General Sessions Court judges.
2. All judges have the authority to act by interchange for any other General Sessions Court judge on any matter that comes before that court on the days assigned.
 - A. In-court proceedings shall be limited to jail inmates unless specifically approved by a sitting judge due to extraordinary emergency circumstances.
 - B. Other in-court proceedings shall be limited to bond issues, guilty pleas, and probation violations, and suspended sentence petitions.
 - C. The following court proceedings shall be done only by videoconferencing (inmate will not be transported):
 1. Agreed dispositions of probation violations
 2. Agreed suspended sentences.
 3. MTMHI (Courtroom 4C)
 - D. Attorneys are to make a good faith effort to resolve the above matters by agreement as they have always done. Note, however, inmates will not be transported for the sole purpose of enabling attorney-client discussions.
 - E. If one of the above proceedings cannot be resolved by agreement, the case will be set for hearing on a date in which both sides, including witnesses are ready and prepared to proceed. Bifurcated hearings will not be permitted. In the case of a motion to modify a bond and/or conditions a written motion must be filed prior to the hearing.

II. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Only the judge, security staff, attorneys, defendants and designated witnesses will be permitted to enter the courtroom and only then under the terms and conditions set by the court. All other persons will remain in the hallway at least 6 feet apart, adhering to the current **Social Distancing** standards or preferably will remain at home.
- B. All court business, regardless of the nature of the business, will be addressed in the courtroom. No one except the judge, staff and ancillary court personnel will be permitted into the judges' secured area.

- C. All attorneys are to be proactive and work in good faith to resolve as many issues as they can by agreement.
- D. Attorneys are to use emails, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing as much as possible when communicating with other attorneys, the courts or their clients. Defense attorneys are reminded that there is videoconference equipment in the A. A. Birch Building and in the trailer in the CDM parking lot (connected only to the CDM and MCC jail facilities). You are urged to use this equipment.
- E. The terms of this Emergency Protocol shall remain in effect until otherwise rescinded in writing by General Sessions Court Judges.

Attorneys can communicate with the client in person (non-contact), through use of the videoconference equipment in the A.A. Birch Building or in the video conference trailer at CDM (these connect only to CDM and MCC jail facilities).