



Calvert County News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Calvert County Courthouse Extends Phase II of Reopening *Restricted Access to Courthouse Extended through March 14*

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – Jan. 14, 2021 – The rapidly evolving health emergency regarding the spread of COVID-19 requires the Maryland court system to continually review and evaluate contingency planning efforts. The Calvert County Courthouse located at 175 Main St. in Prince Frederick will remain under restricted access, with new changes to operations and court proceedings effective immediately through March 14, 2021.

Due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, and consistent with guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), an emergency exists for which measures continue to be required to mitigate potential for exposure for individuals visiting a court or judicial facility and judicial personnel. The rapid increase of COVID-19 infection rates throughout Maryland requires a realignment of the phase of operations consistent with the worsening health conditions and risk to individuals visiting a court of judicial facility and to judicial personnel.

Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera issued new Administrative Orders dated Dec. 22, 2020. Among them was an order extending the Judiciary's Phase II emergency operations through March 14, 2021. The new Administrative Orders regarding Phase II can be viewed on the Judiciary's website at <https://mdcourts.gov/coronavirusorders>. Chief Judge Barbera's Seventh Administrative Order Restricting Statewide Judiciary Operations Due to the COVID-19 Emergency limits matters to be heard in person and encourages the use of remote technology. The Clerks' Office of the Circuit Courts and the offices of the administrative clerks in the District Court shall remain open to the public for emergency matters and **by appointment only** for other matters. In addition, jury trials are now suspended through April 23, 2021.

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At this time, Mark Stephen Chandlee, the Administrative Judge of the Calvert County Circuit Court has determined that all currently scheduled matters in the Calvert County Circuit Court will remain as scheduled. All jury trials will be converted to status or settlement conferences on the dates they are currently set to begin. In regards to other hearings and trials, the Court will make a determination as to whether the matters are to be held remotely or in person. The Circuit Court will rule on requests for conversions to remote hearings and continuances on a case-by-case basis.

Judge Chandlee's Administrative Order, regarding Restricted Access to the Courthouse dated July 17, 2020, remains in full force and effect. Individuals, including parties, attorneys, and witnesses involved in a court case scheduled for a hearing in the Circuit Court on or after Dec. 22, 2020, through March 14, 2021, who have successfully completed the screening process shall report to the Courthouse for the scheduled hearing, unless otherwise instructed or ordered by the Court or its authorized agent. Parties and/or attorneys involved in a case may request in writing to appear remotely for their scheduled hearing. For all other business not related to a scheduled court hearing to be conducted in the Courthouse, the Courthouse is open to the public **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**. To make an appointment, please call **410-535-1600** and request to speak to the desired department to schedule an appointment.

Under Judge Chandlee's Administrative Order, any individual seeking to enter the Circuit Court shall undergo the Court's screening protocol which includes a contactless thermal temperature check, screening questionnaire, and any follow-up questions deemed appropriate. Additionally, all individuals entering or traveling through the Courthouse are required to wear a face mask or covering. Furthermore, all individuals are required to practice proper social distancing while in the Courthouse and follow instructions from the Calvert County Sheriff's Office and bailiffs of the Courthouse.

For further details regarding Judge Chandlee's Administrative Order and the policies and procedures of the Circuit Court, please visit the Circuit Court for Calvert County website at <http://circuitcourt.co.cal.md.us>. The Amended Administrative Order of Chief Judge Barbera and the Administrative Order of Judge Chandlee shall be posted on the website as well as at the Courthouse.

Essential court personnel will be available to the public by telephone between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Maryland Electronic Court (MDEC) continues to be available for electronic filing and is required to be used for all MDEC counties. For pleadings not required to

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be filed electronically, filings will be received by mail and may be received via drop box installed in front of the courthouse.

Any questions or concerns relative to cases or proceedings should be directed to:

- Circuit Court: 410-535-1600
- District Court: 443-550-6700

Calvert County Government continues to take precautionary measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 and limit the number of people infected. Residents, employees and media are encouraged to monitor Calvert County's virtual resource center for updates and information resources: www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Coronavirus.

Find information on Calvert County Government services online at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov. Stay up to date with Calvert County Government on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CalvertCountyMd.

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