

Update for November 20, 2020

Justices, Judges, Circuit Court Clerks and Kentucky Court of Justice Personnel:

Supreme Court amends court operations statewide to address escalating COVID cases

As I drove to work yesterday, I heard the news that 250,000 Americans have died from COVID-19, a catastrophe of historic proportions for our country. And closer to home, [112 of Kentucky's 120 counties](#) are in the red zone for COVID cases. Positive cases among court employees are on the rise. Our hospitals and health-care professionals are quickly becoming overwhelmed and the numbers are expected to continue to climb after the holidays.

It is imperative that we restrict court activities now to protect the public and our people from exposure. As I've said many times over the last few months, one of our guiding truths has been the involuntary nature of most court proceedings. People can choose whether to eat at a restaurant or go shopping, but in most instances they don't get to choose whether they go to court. We have a responsibility to do all we can to keep people from being exposed to a potentially fatal virus.

To address the surging cases, the Supreme Court has amended two orders to limit in-person proceedings and restrict access to judicial facilities. The first, [Administrative Order 2020-71](#), replaces Administrative Order 2020-63 in its entirety. The second, [Administrative Order 2020-72](#), replaces Administrative Order 2020-64 in its entirety. Both orders will become effective Monday, Nov. 30, 2020, and pertain to all 120 counties.

The new orders adopt as mandates many of the recommendations I sent you on [Oct. 29, 2020](#), as counties began moving into the red zone. These including the following:

- Limiting entrance to judicial facilities.
- Requiring remote hearings in all proceedings, except as specified in [Administrative Order 2020-71](#).
- Postponing all jury trials until Feb. 1, 2021.
- Requiring grand juries to either be conducted remotely or suspended.
- Postponing all show cause dockets until Feb. 1, 2021.
- Requiring judicial sales to be conducted either remotely or outside and in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Please read the orders carefully to ensure your court is complying with these requirements. And please send any questions you may have to COVIDcourtconcerns@kycourts.net.

I appreciate your continued patience and steady leadership as we make our way through what will be a difficult winter. The good news is that a vaccine is on the horizon and we're starting to

see a path out of this deep crisis. In the meantime, we must continue to ensure justice for the commonwealth while protecting the health of our employees and the public. I wish you and your families a safe, healthy and happy Thanksgiving holiday.

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