



**GENERAL SESSIONS COURT**  
**COUNTY OF SHELBY, STATE OF TENNESSEE**  
COURTHOUSE, 140 ADAMS AVENUE, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38103

**To: Members of the Memphis and Shelby County Bar**

**From: General Sessions Civil Court Judges**

**Date: April 20, 2020**

**As you are aware, the Supreme Court issued an order suspending in person court hearings beginning March 16, 2020 and then extended that order through April 30, 2020.**

**While we, as judges, realize the hardship these restrictions have caused you, your staff and your clients, we also know that the emotional and financial hardships of this pandemic are being shared by every citizen in our nation and beyond.**

**Whenever we are allowed to resume in person hearings, it is imperative that we proceed cautiously. As we struggle to return to some semblance of normalcy, we must also be vigilant for the health and safety of all who enter our courthouse.**

**We cannot simply resume “business as usual” for the foreseeable future. That being said, we need your cooperation as we attempt to adjudicate the backlog of cases that await.**

**We seek your assistance in limiting the number of people coming into the courthouse and thereby limiting everyone’s possible exposure to unwanted viruses by adhering to the following procedures:**

- 1) We request that you make a diligent effort to settle as many of your cases as possible BEFORE coming to the courthouse. We will no longer suggest that you go to the hallway to discuss your matters on the hearing date.**
- 2) If a settlement is reached, you may present a written order signed by all parties, to our division clerk’s for presentation to the Court at any**

**time on or prior to the hearing date. Attested copies can also be picked up from the clerk or mailed to your office upon making the proper arrangement with the Clerk's Office.**

- 3) Make certain that each order and/or consent agreement contains all of the contact information for each party involved (name, address, telephone, fax and email) should the Court have any questions, so we can contact the parties in a timely manner.**
- 4) Additionally, please be advised that each of the 6 divisions of our court will be severely and necessarily limiting the number of people in each courtroom at one time. While each judge reserves the right to determine that number for their respective courtroom, it will be somewhere in the neighborhood of 10 to 25, including lawyers, litigants and court staff. Also, in good conscience and concern for the public, we cannot allow the hallways and other common areas to become overcrowded. With that, please be prepared to limit the number of cases that are set.**
- 5) Please be advised that any "consent announcements via facsimile" must be consented to by ALL parties or they will not be accepted.**

**Finally, please assist us in spreading the word that due to restrictions, only the person whose name appears on the case will be allowed to enter the courtroom and quite possibly the courthouse.**

**Again, please know that while we understand the frustration and extra work that these new procedures will cause, it is necessary that we remain vigilant and cautious, perhaps for an extended period of time.**