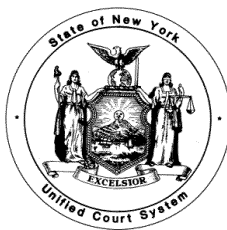


**OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE**  
10<sup>TH</sup> Judicial District - Nassau County



**MEMORANDUM**

To: Nassau County Legal Community

From: Hon. Norman St. George, Administrative Judge, 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

Date: May 26, 2020

Re: Return to In-Person Operations—Phase 1

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As always in these challenging times, it is my sincere hope that this message finds each of you and your families well and healthy. You have my continued thanks for the cooperation, patience and support that you have given our Court community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, through this public health crisis Nassau's Courts have remained open at the Consolidated Courthouse located in the County Court building. While foot traffic has been extremely limited, Essential/Emergency Matters have continued to be heard virtually. Over the past several weeks, Nassau's Courts have been steadily increasing the number of cases handled, including the resolution of all motions that were fully submitted to the Court prior to March 16<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the Judges in each Court have been tirelessly conferencing cases and entering resolutions, dispositions, and settlements. Indeed, as a result of the success we have had in handling this gradually increased case load under these challenging circumstances, Judge Marks recently determined to re-open the filing of new cases in Nassau County using the NYSCEF system if available, and the EDDS system previously described. Paper filing will be permitted for unrepresented litigants.

Last week many counties throughout the State have achieved the benchmarks established by the Governor for re-opening and have opened on a limited basis. Concurrently, Chief Judge DiFiore has directed that the Courts in those counties further expand operations in three phases. Based on recent comments by the Governor, the Long Island Region should achieve the benchmarks for re-opening either Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, or Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. Once the Governor opens the Long Island Region, this will trigger the Chief Judge's directive that the Courts begin Phase 1 of a "Return To More In-person Operations" in Nassau and Suffolk. Consequently, it is now anticipated that Phase 1 could begin as early as Friday, May

29<sup>th</sup> or Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our remarkable Judges and Court staff, we are ready to begin Phase 1 as soon as the Governor opens the Long Island Region. In anticipation of Phase 1, the following is an overview of how the Courts intend to gradually transition back to normalcy. Rest assured that the Court's highest priority during all Phases of the process will be the safety of all those who enter our Courthouses.

### ***General Court Procedures***

Phase 1 will permit the re-opening of each of the Court buildings throughout the County as set forth herein. Access to each of the Courts will remain restricted.

All proceedings, including Arraignments, Essential/Emergency, and Non-essential matters will continue virtually. Each Courthouse will have a Courtroom dedicated for virtual Essential/Emergency matters. There will be no in-person Court proceedings with litigants or attorneys.

Judges and Chambers Staff will return to each Courthouse; however, each Judge will continue to work virtually in their Chambers by conferencing cases, entering settlements and dispositions, working on motions, and rotating through the Virtual Courtroom to handle Essential/Emergency Matters.

Limited Clerk's office staff will be on hand to provide guidance to the public and support to the Judges. In addition, there will be the re-opening of centralized Help Centers in our Supreme, Surrogate's, Family and District Court locations in order to assist unrepresented litigants. There will also be a virtual access point in each Courthouse for unrepresented litigants to access the Virtual Courtrooms.

### ***Cleaning and Sanitizing Our Court Facilities***

The cleaning and sanitizing of all County-owned Court facilities will be one of our top priorities. Through our longstanding partnership with our cleaning subcontractor, the Corporate Source, we have the ability to keep our facilities meticulously clean and we have every confidence in the Corporate Source to meet the challenges of the extra cleaning required by the pandemic.

In addition, we have worked to ensure that appropriate PPEs are available at the entrances of the buildings. Through Corporate Source, we have deployed and stocked 72 hand sanitizing stations for use at all our public entrances, employee entrances, elevator landings and high traffic areas throughout the District. There will be limited entry and exit points at each Court. Face masks must be brought and worn by everyone entering any Courthouse. Magnetometer and X-Ray equipment in each Court will be surrounded with plexiglass and have been reconfigured to maximize safety and distancing objectives. Spacing markers will be affixed to the floors at 6-foot intervals to assist with social distancing objectives.

### **Supreme Court**

During Phase 1, access to Court will only be at the South entrance. The North entrance will remain closed. Public entry to the second floor Help Desk will be regulated by Court Officers in the lobby with a spacious waiting area established on the first floor to ensure that the counter is not overcrowded. Spacing decals have been purchased for all necessary floors.

The Calendar Control Part Courtroom on the first floor will be used as the virtual Courtroom in the Supreme Court for all Essential/Emergency matters. Judges will be assigned in rotation to appear virtually from their Chambers. A Clerk will be in the Virtual Courtroom to coordinate and facilitate all operational needs. Court Reporters and Interpreters, if needed, will continue to participate virtually. In the event a physical appearance is required by an unrepresented party, a second satellite Skype location will be available in the Central Jury Courtroom across the hall.

### **Matrimonial Center**

The Matrimonial Center will remain closed except for Judges and Judges' Chamber Staff during Phase 1. There will be an area for public inquiry which will be separated by rope barriers just outside the entry landing on the second floor. Walk in activity for emergencies and other essential matters will be addressed virtually and through the main Supreme Court building. Court Officers will direct the public accordingly.

### **County Court**

Access to Court will be only at the South entrance. The North entrance to the building will be closed during Phase 1. The West Wing will be closed except for Judges and Judges' Chamber Staff.

The Main Building has served as the Consolidated Courthouse for the duration of the pandemic. Accordingly, many of the needed protocols and safety precautions are already in place, including the use of multiple Virtual Courtrooms on the first floor of the Main Building. Reporters and Interpreters, if needed, will continue to participate virtually in all proceedings.

### **Surrogate's Court**

The Surrogate's Courtroom on the third floor of the main building of the County Court will continue to be used as the Virtual Courtroom for Essential/Emergency and designated non-essential matters with the Surrogate appearing virtually from her Chambers. The Courtroom will be staffed with a single clerk. Court Reporters and Interpreters, if needed, will continue to participate virtually. In the event a physical appearance is required by an unrepresented party, a satellite Skype location on the first floor will be available. A help counter will be staffed at the clerical intake window which is already outfitted with plexiglass and configured for appropriate social distancing.

### **Family Court**

Only the South entrance will be open during Phase 1 for unrepresented litigants to access the Courthouse for Essential/Emergency applications. The attorney window in the Clerk's Office will be used for purposes of assisting public with inquiries. Spacing markers will be affixed to the floors at 6-foot intervals to assist with social distancing objectives.

The Family Court will have two Virtual Courtrooms on the first floor which will be used for Essential/Emergency and designated non-essential matters. Judges will be appearing virtually from Chambers. Each Virtual Courtroom will be staffed with a single Clerk. Court Reporters and Interpreters, if needed, will continue to participate virtually. In the event a physical appearance is required by an unrepresented party, a satellite Skype location on the first floor will also be available.

### **District Court**

The District Court has recently re-opened on limited basis for Virtual Arraignments and expanded Virtual Felony Exam hearings. The public entrance located on the East side of the building will be open for limited foot traffic into the building. The Civil and Criminal Clerk's Offices will be designated and utilized as help centers for the general public. Spacing markers will be affixed to the floors at 6-foot intervals to assist with social distancing objectives.

The Arraignment A and Arraignment B Courtrooms on the first floor will be used as the Virtual Courtrooms for District Court for Essential/Emergency matters and designated non-essential matters with the Judges appearing virtually from Chambers. Each Virtual Courtroom will be staffed with a single Clerk. Court Reporters and Interpreters, if needed, will continue to participate virtually. In the event a physical appearance is required by an unrepresented party, the satellite Skype location from a conference room adjacent to the Courtrooms will also be available.

### **City Courts—Long Beach and Glen Cove**

The Long Beach and Glen Cove City Courts will remain closed to the public during Phase 1. The Judges will work virtually from Chambers with Essential/Emergency applications to be continued through the District Court.

### **Village Courts**

The Village Courts will remain closed during Phase 1. It has been recommended to the Village Courts that the Judges and staff return gradually depending on the needs and size of the individual Court. Returning staff should provide adjournment dates, answer phones and email messages to the Courts, and provide clearances of licenses and registrations with Judicial approval.

Rest assured that I will continue to update you throughout this crisis. It is my sincere wish that you and your families continue to enjoy good health and are able to stay safe during this extraordinary time.