



CIRCUIT COURT FOR BALTIMORE CITY

Office of the Jury Commissioner
100 North Calvert Street, Room 239
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Frequently Asked Questions Related to COVID-19

On **April 4, 2022**, the Judicial Branch’s COVID-19 emergency period will conclude, pursuant to the [Administrative Order Lifting the COVID-19 Health Emergency](#), issued by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals on March 28, 2022.

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CHAIRS AND TABLES

1. How often are chairs, tables and chair handles sanitized with wipes?

Wipes are provided to enable users to wipe chairs and tables as needed. Handles or “touch points” are wiped daily by the cleaning staff.

2. Are there assigned seats in the jury assembly rooms? In the courtroom?

No.

3. Will there be tables in the quiet room so that I can do personal work?



Yes, there will be tables in the quiet room so that you may work during the day and while waiting. Wipes are provided to enable users to wipe chairs and tables as needed. Handles or “touch points” are wiped daily by the cleaning staff.

EXCUSAL REQUESTS

1. What happens if I just don’t come? Is there a penalty if I do not appear for jury service or do not complete my service?

If you do not appear for jury service on the date and time directed by the summons, you can be fined up to \$1,000, put in jail up to 60 days, or both.

If you do not complete jury service, you can be fined up to \$1,000, put in jail up to 90 days, or both.

The relevant laws are Maryland Annotated Code, Courts & Judicial Proceedings Article, Sections [8-504](#) and [8-505](#).

There are also penalties for failing to complete the Juror Qualification Form accurately and for not returning that Form. You can learn more about these penalties [here](#).

2. The jury system is a one-day-one trial. How long is the day? Will I be sent to multiple courtrooms?

The courthouse is open to jurors at 7:30 a.m. daily. Please only use the Saint Paul Street and Fayette Street (accessible) entrances. .

You should expect to be here during normal business hours which are 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

If you are selected for a trial, you will be required to serve for the duration of that trial.

3. I have issues with childcare because schools are not reopening and are only offering virtual classes. What should I do?

The court is allowing a more generous policy on rescheduling. You may postpone your jury service to a date within the next 90 days that may be more convenient for you. If serving during a school break is practical, you may select a date within that school break range as well.

Documentation may be required.

Please call the jury office at 410-333-3775 to reschedule your service. The call center is open to accept calls Monday through Friday, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., except State and Federal holidays.

4. I am a caregiver and need to be home with my loved one. What should I do?



The court is allowing a more generous policy on rescheduling. You may postpone your jury service to a date within the next 90 days that may be more convenient for you to make arrangements.

Please call the jury office at 410-333-3775 to reschedule your service. The call center is open and accepts calls Monday through Friday, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., except State and Federal holidays.

5. Myself or a household member has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days. Should I report for jury duty?

DO NOT REPORT if you or a member of your household has tested positive for COVID-19, if you are experiencing symptoms, or if you are waiting for COVID-19 test results. Please call the jury office at 410-333-3775 to reschedule your service. The call center is to accept calls Monday through Friday, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., except State and Federal holidays.

6. Will I lose my unemployment benefits if I serve on a jury?

No. Under Maryland law, you will not be denied unemployment benefits because you had jury service and were unable to work or seek work. The relevant law is Maryland Annotated Code, Labor & Employment Article, Sections [8-101\(z\)\(3\)\(x\)](#), [8-907\(a\)](#) and [8-1108\(a\)\(1\)](#).

For more information, you can contact the [Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation](#).

FOOD/RESTROOM

1. Can I still bring my own lunch and snacks? Can I still eat in the assembly room?

Yes, jurors are allowed to bring their own lunch and snacks. Jurors may eat in the assembly areas but must be mindful of debris, odor and spills when choosing food items.

Jurors will be allowed to leave the building for breaks and bring closed food back into the courthouse.

2. How will water coolers be sanitized?

Wipes are provided to enable users to wipe water coolers as needed. Handles or “touch points” are wiped daily by the cleaning staff. We encourage you to bring your own personal water bottle.

3. How often are restrooms disinfected? Will this happen during the day?

Restrooms are cleaned at least once daily by housekeeping staff. Soap, hand sanitizer and wipes will be available in the restrooms.

4. Will the vending machines and charging stations still be available?



Yes.

Charging stations will still be available for your convenience. The court will provide cleaning solution and or/wipes to sanitize the charging stations before and after your use.

5. Are there receptacles for proper disposal of PPE?

The court will provide trash cans for proper disposal of PPE.

SELF-CHECK-IN KIOSKS

1. Will the touchscreen self-check-in kiosks still be available?

The touchscreen self-check-in kiosks will reduce the amount of time spent face to face with jury staff and will allow you to register faster and more efficiently. If you wish to register with a live person, or have difficulty using the kiosk, staff will be more than willing to assist you.

The court will provide cleaning solution and/or wipes to sanitize the touchscreen self-check-in kiosks before and after your use.

MASKS

1. Will masks be required all day?

The wearing of face masks is currently optional.

2. Will defendants and witnesses be masked while speaking?

The wearing of face masks is currently optional.

3. Will I need to remove my mask when speaking in the courtroom?

The wearing of face masks is optional. You may be required lower your mask while speaking.

4. I am deaf, hard of hearing, or rely on lipreading to communicate. Do I have an exception to wearing a mask?

The wearing of face masks is optional.

5. How is the air circulated inside of the courthouse? What is the rate at which air is exchanged in the courthouse?

Each HVAC unit has an outside air intake that brings air into the building. Air is exchanged three to five times per hour. As recommended by the CDC, the Baltimore City Department of General Services (“DGS”) installed MERV-13 filters to increase air filtration as highly as possible.



PLEXIGLASS

- 1. Are there plexiglass barriers between the jurors? Are there plexiglass barriers between staff and the jurors?**

No.

- 2. May I wear a face shield?**

Yes.

- 3. Is eye protection provided by the Court?**

No, eye protection is not currently provided.

SECURITY

- 1. Will there be screening at the door? Will they check my temperature?**

No, there will not be any COVID-19 screening questions or non-contact temperature checks at the door.

- 2. Will there be COVID-19 testing performed and anyone who tests positive be dismissed immediately?**

COVID-19 testing will *not* be performed on-site.

For a list of COVID-19 testing facilities in Maryland, you may follow this link [here](#). If you are waiting for COVID-19 tests results, please advise the jury commissioner prior to reporting for jury duty.

- 3. Will anyone with a fever be sent home? Will they be paid or given credit for coming?**

DO NOT REPORT if you or a member of your household has tested positive for COVID-19, if you are experiencing symptoms, or if you are waiting for COVID-19 test results. Please call the jury office at 410-333-3775 to reschedule your service. The call center is to accept calls Monday through Friday, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., except State and Federal holidays.

- 4. Will access to the courthouse be limited to prospective jurors and essential personnel?**

No.

- 5. What happens if I, another juror, or jury staff test positive while I am serving? How will everyone be notified?**

Persons will be notified through a process called *contact tracing*. Contact tracing is the process of identifying people who may have come into contact with an individual with an infectious disease, in this case COVID-19. The contact tracer reaches out by phone to someone who has tested positive for the virus to determine their whereabouts and close contacts for the two-week period of time when they may have been infectious. ***It is very important that you provide accurate contact information to the jury office in case we need to reach you.***



For detailed information on Maryland's contact tracing, covidLINK, you may wish to click [here](#).

If you are waiting for COVID-19 tests results, please advise the jury commissioner prior to reporting for jury duty.

6. Who is responsible for the security protocol? What happens with noncompliance?

The Baltimore City Sheriff's Office is responsible for the enforcement of the security protocol within the courthouses.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

1. Are people required to sit 3-feet apart?

No.

2. Are courthouse hallways labeled with directional signs?

Yes, the hallways are labeled with signs directing persons to walk with the flow of traffic and maintain a social distance from one another.

3. I don't want to be confined in an elevator with another person. Can I take the stairs?

The Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse allows for the use of stairways but for security reasons, the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Courthouse does not.

4. Will court still be held in the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Courthouse?

Yes.

TRANSPORTATION

1. My bus line is not operating on a regular schedule. What do I do?

The court encourages you to find a suitable means of transportation to come to and from the courthouse. If taking public transportation, please visit the Maryland Transit Authority for information on your specific bus route, COVID-19 requirements, and service changes ([here](#)).

2. I don't feel comfortable taking public transportation, where can I park?

Please visit our website to find resources for parking and lunch discounts ([here](#)). Vendors change discount offers at will. The Circuit Court for Baltimore City is not responsible for discounted or changed offers made by vendors.

TRIALS

1. What types of cases will be heard?



The court will resume jury trials involving both criminal and civil matters.

2. If I must report in-person, which courtrooms will be used for jury selection?

All courtrooms are now open for jury selections.

OTHER

1. Will we be allowed to bring?

- a. **Aerosol sprays:** No, not permitted
- b. **Mask:** Optional
- c. **Reading Material:** Yes, encouraged
- d. **Pens:** Yes, encouraged
- e. **Travel Size Sanitizer, Disinfectant Wipes, Gloves:** Yes, encouraged
- f. **Electronic Devices:** Yes, but must be turned off or set to vibrate while inside the courtroom
- g. **Water and Snacks:** Yes

2. Is the court in compliance with Governor Hogan’s and/or Mayor Scott’s public health mandates?

The Maryland Judiciary operates under the judicial branch of government, which differs from the executive and legislative branches. Although we do follow the basic mandates outlined by the governor and mayor, the court has the authority and flexibility to resume jury trials in order to meet its mission and goals.

You may wish to read the Maryland Court of Appeals’ [Administrative Order Lifting the COVID-19 Health Emergency](#) as to the Maryland Judiciary, issued March 1, 2022, and the [Local Administrative Order 2022-04](#), issued March 1, 2022.

You may also wish to read the Circuit Court for Baltimore City Amended COVID-19 Response Plan for the Progressive Resumption of Full Function of Judiciary Operations ([recited here](#)).

3. Are Court employees required to be vaccinated?

Pursuant to the [Administrative Order on COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Judiciary Personnel in Courthouses and Judicial Branch Facilities](#), issued by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeal on August 20, 2021, “[a]ll Judiciary personnel, including, but not limited to, judges, magistrates, clerks, administrative and contractual staff, and interns, whether compensated by the State or by a local jurisdiction, who have received vaccinations as required by the COVID-19 vaccination protocols, shall provide proof of vaccination by September 27, 2021... Beginning September 27, 2021, until such time that a proof of vaccination is submitted, all Judiciary personnel who have not received the required number of vaccination doses, regardless of the reason for their unvaccinated status, will be required to submit a negative COVID-19 test result on a weekly basis in order to enter a Judiciary facility.”



Court employees who test positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, are required to quarantine for five (5) days. If the employee has no symptoms after 5 days, they can return to work. If a court employee has had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, and the employee has been boosted or completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines within the last five months or completed the primary series of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine within the last two months, the employee may continue reporting to work and may remain at work with a negative COVID-19 PCR test. However, if an employee has not been boosted or is unvaccinated, they must quarantine for 5 days and may return to work with a negative COVID-19 PCR test.

4. Why is the court calling in jurors during a pandemic?

The Maryland Judiciary provides fair, efficient, and effective justice for all. As we are phasing reopening efforts. The court is resuming jury trials to hear and resolve cases. Many other states have resumed jury trials.

5. I haven't left my house. Can I schedule a virtual meeting with the jury commissioner's office to discuss my concerns with serving?

At this time, remote meetings will not be held by the jury commissioner's office. You may wish to communicate in writing or speak with staff at 410-333-3775 during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., except State and Federal holidays.