

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there are a number of new rules governing how the criminal justice system works. The following is a summary of how your criminal case might be affected by the new rules but should not be considered as formal legal advice. Please keep in mind that this information is neither exhaustive nor complete, as rules are constantly changing and updating as more information becomes available. For more information regarding civil cases please visit <https://www.courts.state.md.us/> or <https://www.mdaccessjustice.org/covid-19>.

I am charged with a crime and have a court date scheduled soon. What is going to happen to my case?

The Maryland Court of Appeals has restricted the operations of Maryland courts through June 5, 2020 and postponed all non-emergency matters. The types of proceedings considered “emergency matters” are covered below. Any currently scheduled trial date that is at least six weeks after the end of the COVID-19 emergency period, as declared by Governor Hogan, will proceed, unless the court in which your trial is scheduled orders otherwise.

I appealed the ruling in my case and have an oral argument scheduled before the Court of Special Appeals or the Court of Appeals. What will happen to the oral argument?

Court of Special Appeals: Oral arguments scheduled for Friday, May 1, 2020 will take place remotely. The court will notify parties regarding the status of future arguments as more information becomes available.

Court of Appeals: Oral arguments scheduled for Thursday, April 30, 2020, Friday, May 1, 2020, and Monday, May 4, 2020 are postponed until further notice. Oral arguments that were previously scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 2020 and Friday, April 3, 2020, have been rescheduled for Tuesday, May 12, 2020 and Wednesday, May 13, 2020. The Court is currently considering whether to conduct these oral arguments virtually. If you have an oral argument scheduled, you will be notified at least 10 days in advance if the Court decides to take this approach.

I was scheduled to participate in a grand jury proceeding. Will this proceeding still happen?

No. The Court of Appeals has ordered that all grand juries be suspended until further notice, unless the proceeding receives individual approval by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.

So which proceedings are considered “emergency matters”?

In Circuit Courts, the following are considered emergency matters and will happen as scheduled: bail reviews/bench warrants, arraignments for detained defendants, juvenile detention hearings, extradition cases, and body attachments.

In District Courts, the following are considered emergency matters and will happen as scheduled: bail reviews/bench warrants, emergency evaluation petitions, quarantine and isolation violations, and body attachments.

District Court Commissioners will handle the following matters: initial appearances, applications for statement of charges, acceptance of bail bonds, and bench warrant satisfaction.

Are people still being held in jail during this pandemic?

Yes, people are still being incarcerated. However, judges have been instructed to identify at-risk incarcerated individuals for potential release for health reasons, taking into account the victim/community’s safety. Judges have also been directed to set prompt hearings for warrant or body attachment service for the following cases: minor probation violations, child support contempt cases, failure to pay costs or fines, and failures to appear.

Governor Hogan has signed an executive order that speeds up the release of inmates who were already eligible to be released within the next four months and the processing of inmates eligible for home detention. The order also directs the Maryland Parole Commission to accelerate consideration of parole for inmates convicted of non-

violent crimes who are older than 60, have a good record while incarcerated, and an approved plan for re-entry to society.

Where can I find updates regarding the courts and my case?

You will receive information about your rescheduled proceedings from the court in which your trial will be held. You can also find updated information by doing the following:

1. Visit <https://mdcourts.gov/coronavirusupdate> for updated orders and information about court operations.
2. Visit <http://casesearch.courts.state.md.us/casesearch/inquiry-index.jsp> for updates regarding your individual case including dates for upcoming court appearances. *
3. Contact the respective circuit or district court for the county in which your case will take place. Court personnel are available to the public by telephone between the hours of 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. A chart with each courthouse's number is provided below.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE COURTS

All courts open from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday

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| Court of Appeals Phone: 410-260-1500 | Carroll County – Circuit Phone: 410-386-8710 | Howard – Circuit Phone: 410-313-2111 | Talbot – Circuit Phone: 410-822-2611 |
| Court of Special Appeals Phone: 410-260-1450 | Carroll – District Phone: 410-871-3500 | Howard – District Phone: 410- 480-7700 | Talbot – District Phone: 410-819-5850 |
| Alleghany – Circuit Phone: 301-777-5925 | Cecil – Circuit Phone: 410-996-1021 | Kent – Circuit Phone: 410-778-7460 | Washington – Circuit Phone: 301-733-8660 |
| Alleghany – District Phone: 301-723-3100 | Cecil – District Phone: 410-996-2700 | Kent – District Phone: 410-810-3360 | Washington – District Phone: 240- 420-4600 |
| Anne Arundel – Circuit Phone: 410-222-1397 | Charles – Circuit Phone: 301-932-3201 | Montgomery – Circuit Phone: 240-777-9400 | Wicomico – Circuit Phone: 410-543-6551 |
| Anne Arundel – District <u>Annapolis:</u> 410-260-1370 <u>Glen Burnie:</u> 410-260-1800 | Charles – District Phone: 301-934-5110 | Montgomery – District <u>Rockville:</u> 301-563-8800 <u>Silver Spring:</u> 301-563-8500 | Wicomico – District Phone: 410-713-3500 |
| Baltimore – Circuit Phone: 410-887-2601 | Dorchester – Circuit Phone: 410-228-0481 | Prince George’s – Circuit Phone: 301- 952-3318 | Worcester – Circuit Phone: 410-632-5500 |
| Baltimore – District <u>Catonsville:</u> 410-512-2500 <u>Towson:</u> 410-512-2000 <u>Essex:</u> 410-512-2300 | Dorchester – District Phone: 410-901-1420 | Prince George’s – District <u>Hyattsville:</u> 301-298-4200 <u>Upper Marlboro:</u> 301-298-4000 | Worcester – District <u>Snow Hill:</u> 410-219-7830 <u>Ocean City:</u> 410-723-6935 |
| Baltimore City – Circuit Phone: 410- 333-3750 | Frederick – Circuit Phone: 301-600-1976 | Queen Anne’s – Circuit Phone: 410-758-0216 | |
| Baltimore City – District <u>Wabash:</u> 410-878-8000 <u>Eastside:</u> 410-878-8500 <u>Hargrove:</u> 410-878-8300 | Frederick – District Phone: 301-600-2000 | Queen Anne’s – District Phone: 410-819-4000 | |
| Calvert – Circuit Phone: 410-535-1600 | Garrett – Circuit Phone: 301-334-1937 | Somerset – Circuit Phone: 410- 845-4840 | |
| Calvert – District Phone: 443-550-6700 | Garrett – District Phone: 301- 334-8020 | Somerset – District Phone: 410-845-4700 | |
| Caroline – Circuit Phone: 410-479-1811 | Harford – Circuit Phone: 410-838-4952 | St. Mary’s – Circuit Phone: 301- 475-7844 | |
| Caroline – District Phone: 410-819-4600 | Harford – District Phone: 410-836-4545 | St. Mary’s – District Phone: 301-880-2700 | |

***Note:** Courts have indicated that due to the uncertainty of when they will reopen and return to normal operation, case search is not regularly updated to reflect rescheduled matters. However, some counties have established assignment offices within their circuit and district courts for the purpose of rescheduling cases. If CaseSearch is not updated, please call the court where your case is being heard and ask if it has any assignment offices set up and whether any decisions as to the rescheduling of cases have been made.