

As we are seeing an alarming spike in positive Coronavirus cases nationally, statewide and even among city forces, we will be making a few changes to policies and procedures that will be followed by the Fairfield County Municipal Court beginning November 16, 2020:

Municipal Court Proceedings:

- While the front doors of the Municipal Court building will be open, admittance beyond the security checkpoint will ONLY be granted to litigants and attorneys who have scheduled hearing in the building. All those entering the building will be required to wear a mask over their nose and mouth and; the Court will have masks available for litigants who do not have personal access to this protective equipment.
- Two security officers will remain on duty at the front door to maintain safety and health protocols
- The Court will continue to hear Tuesday and Thursday morning cite-in arraignments and will continue to stress social distancing among those in attendance. ONLY the person charged will be permitted into the building; all others WILL be turned away. Defendants who appear with young children will be told to come back alone at the next available cite-in arraignment day.
- Daily jail arraignments will continue to be conducted via video.
- Settlement conferences and pre-trials will **all** return to Zoom; the only in-person appearances will be those statutorily required to be held in-person
- The Court will conduct as many proceedings as possible via electronic means. Once resumed, in-person hearings (pleas, evictions, and small claims) will be scheduled at specific times at least ½ hour apart to ensure social distancing.

Municipal Court Clerk's Office:

- All criminal, traffic and civil case filings should continue to be done via regular U.S. mail, email or facsimile only. COURT APPOINTED COUNSEL BILLING PACKETS MUST BE MAILED TO THE COURT, AS WE MUST HAVE THE ORIGINAL.
- All payments on cases with pending balances or waivers of traffic citations should continue to be made via regular U.S. mail or online. No in-person payments will be accepted unless the litigant has already been admitted to the building for a scheduled court hearing.
- Please visit the court's website at www.fcmcourt.org for specific details regarding filings and payments during this period.

Municipal Court Probation:

- The Probation staff will begin working on a week-to-week staggered rotation schedule
- Weekly specialty docket (Special Abilities Court, Drug/Recovery Court, Mental Health Court & Veterans' Treatment Court) status hearings will be held via Zoom until further notice.
- Court ordered drug testing frequency has been altered.
- Face-to-face meetings between Probation Officers and defendants are highly discouraged. Probation Officers will maintain contact with their probationers via electronic means whenever possible. If face-to-face meetings between Probation Officers and defendants are unavoidable, they MUST be scheduled and will be set at time increments that will maintain social distancing requirements. Failure to comply with scheduled meeting times or electronic check-in will result in sanctions for defendants.

Law Director/City Prosecutor

- The Law Director/City Prosecutor's Office is closed for in-person business. All business with the office must be conducted via electronic means. The Prosecutor's Office intends to send offers to defense counsel. In the event that the offer is not accepted, a Zoom meeting (set up by the prosecutor's office) will occur between judge, prosecutor, and defense counsel on the scheduled pre-trial or settlement conference date.
- Motion hearings will begin in-person hearings. For Motion to Suppress hearings, Zoom conferences will be held two days prior to the scheduled hearing to discuss specific issues of the motion.

As has been the case since March, as additional and/or changing information is released, these policies and procedures are subject to change.