

### **Fifth Judicial District Courtroom Procedures and Court Information**

These rules are subject to change as new orders and guidelines are issued and restrictions are relaxed.

- 1) Parties are encouraged but not required to appear by electronic means starting June 1, 2020.
- 2) If you are feeling ill, you SHALL notify either your counsel or the person who requested your attendance to either reschedule the hearing or arrange an alternative mode of appearance. If you are unable to contact those individuals, you SHALL notify the Clerk of Court and await further instructions.
- 3) For parties wishing to appear electronically you must notify the clerks of this 24 hours in advance.
- 4) Hearings will continue with a staggered schedule.
- 5) Attorneys with multiple hearings can stay in the Courtroom but must observe social distancing.
- 6) Parties, witnesses, victims, and guests of all, shall wait outside the courthouse observing social distancing prior to their hearings and are not allowed to wait in the courthouse, without specific permission, upon conclusion of their hearing. Only necessary people or those with advanced permission will be allowed in the courtroom.
- 7) ALL persons entering the courtroom SHALL wear a face mask.
- 8) Upon entering the courtroom all persons SHALL use hand sanitizer which will be provided by the District.
- 9) Each morning the tables and witness stand will be sanitized.
- 10) Counsel and their clients shall do their best to observe social distancing during court appearances. For hearings with multiple attorneys or multiple parties social distancing will require scattering throughout the jury box if tables are occupied.
- 11) Upon end of each use counsel (or pro se participants) will be required to use cleaning materials to spray down the table or area in front of them and chair. Products for cleaning will be provided.
- 12) All persons entering the courtroom shall be cognizant of their surroundings and attempt to make contact with as little of the furniture and surfaces as possible.
- 13) For hearings/trials with more than two witnesses, additional witnesses shall wait outside the courthouse until notified they can enter. For hearings with two witnesses, upon permission the second witness can wait in the jury room. They will be required to sanitize any surfaces they touch upon exiting the jury room. If the exclusionary rule is not invoked witnesses may sit in the gallery but must observe social distancing of at least 6 feet and will be required to sanitize the areas they used upon leaving.
- 14) These rules apply specifically to hearings and bench trials. Additional rules will be supplied for jury trials.