

HCGSC PLAN TO RESUME COURT PROCEEDINGS

I. HAMILTON COUNTY GENERAL SESSIONS CIVIL COURT PROCEEDINGS


- A. Whenever possible, HCGSC will continue to conduct civil court proceedings in accordance with the TSC Order through means other than in-person proceedings. This will include the use of email, telephone or videoconferencing, or other means. HCGSC will continue to utilize the Courts Building (Courtrooms #5 & #6) to hear all civil court matters.
- B. Mental health involuntary commitment proceedings, pursuant to Title 33 of the Tennessee Code Annotated, will continue through telephone or videoconference in accordance with the TSC Order.
- C. As directed by the TSC Order, no detainer initial case settings, detainer motions, or detainer bench trials will be set until June 3, 2020 (at the earliest). HCGSC will continue to conduct proceedings in accordance with the TSC Order with respect to detainer “extraordinary circumstances.”
- D. HCGSC will attempt to increase the number of in-person civil court proceedings, when necessary, in “phases” to provide maximum protection to the public, parties, attorneys, support staff, law enforcement, court officers, and all other all persons who might be inside or outside of the courtrooms while in the Courts Building. As such, HCGSC plans to operate in the following “phases”:
 1. **PHASE 1 – From the adoption of this Judicial District Master Plan and until May 18, 2020** – No in-person court civil proceedings will be held. This prohibition includes initial case settings (commonly known as “docket call”), motions, and bench trials.
 2. **PHASE 2 – Beginning May 18, 2020 and until June 3, 2020** – No bench trials will be set; however, initial case settings and motions may be heard at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m. or 1 p.m. (Mondays through Fridays). These in-person civil proceedings will be limited to ten (10) cases per hour on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and will be spaced between two (2) courtrooms (Courtrooms #5 and #6). On Thursdays, these in-person civil proceedings will be limited to five (5) cases per hour, and will be held in Courtroom 6.
 3. **PHASE 3 – Beginning June 3, 2020 and until further notice** – Initial case settings, motions and bench trials (including detainer actions) may be heard at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m. or 1 p.m. (Mondays through Fridays). These in-person civil Proceedings will be limited to twenty-five (25) cases per hour on Mondays,

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Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and will be spaced between two (2) courtrooms (Courtrooms #5 and #6). On Thursdays, these in-person civil proceedings will be limited to ten (10) cases per hour, and will be held in Courtroom #6. Further, if there is a stable or sustained decline in the number positive COVID-19 cases in Hamilton County, HCGSC will gradually add more cases to each docket.

- E. With respect to any in-person court proceeding scheduled during the aforementioned times, **parties are encouraged to resolve their matter(s) prior to any scheduled court date(s), and shall attempt to hold their matter(s) via telephone or videoconferencing when possible.** Parties may also agree to reset their in-person court proceedings to a time/date beginning in October of 2020.
- F. Finally, parties and/or attorneys are required to cooperate with the GS Civil Clerk's Office when scheduling their in-person proceedings during Phase 2 and Phase 3, estimating the number of witnesses and party representatives that will be present. In the event that more than eight (8) total persons are expected to be present (including attorney(s)) for any given case, the case shall be set Friday at 1 p.m. (if possible). This will minimize the number of persons present in the Courts Building and HC Atrium.


The aforementioned HCGSC plan is approved and submitted to Hamilton County Presiding Judge Marie Williams this 30th day of April, 2020.



Honorable Judge Christie Sell, Division 1



Honorable Judge Alex McVeagh, Division 2



Honorable Judge Gerald Webb, Division 3



Honorable Judge Lila Statom, Division 4



Honorable Judge Gary W. Starnes, Division 5