

# IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF MERCER COUNTY, OHIO

In the Matter of:

**ALTERNATIVE PROTOCOLS FOR  
OPERATION OF AND MAINTAINING  
SERVICES OF THE MERCER COUNTY  
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS,  
GENERAL DIVISION IN RESPONSE TO  
OHIO'S PLAN TO RE-OPEN ECONOMY  
DURING THE STAY-AT-HOME ORDER  
AND MASS GATHERING BAN OF  
MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE DURING  
COVID19 PANDEMIC**

**JOURNAL ENTRY**

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In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, while the stay-at-home order and mass gathering ban of more than ten people remains in place and in light of Governor Mike DeWine's April 27, 2020, announcement of the State's plan to re-open part of the economy in Ohio beginning May 1, 2020, the Mercer County Court of Common Pleas, while continuing to seek to protect the public and the court staff and maintain essential court functions, hereby gives notice of its intent to keep in full force and effect the alternative protocols set forth in its entry issued March 18, 2020, and to adopt the following requirements which the court staff will follow while undertaking the responsibilities of their positions in person and in the Mercer County Courthouse and outside thereof, as well as governing the conduct of persons who personally appear for court business in the courthouse:

1. All staff will wear face coverings during personal contact with and while in the presence of any member of the public.
2. All persons who personally appear, including attorneys, shall wear face coverings while on the third floor outside the offices of the court, in the courtroom, and in the court offices.
3. All persons, staff, and those doing business with the court shall, while in the presence of one another, maintain physical distance from others of at least six feet as is practicable.
4. As much as possible, persons having business with the court who intend to personally appear shall telephone the court at (419) 586-2122, or in the alternative, the Probation Department of the court at (419) 586-5870, to schedule an appointed time at which they intend to appear.

5. In accordance with the State's mass gathering ban of more than ten people, gathering of more than ten people anywhere on the third floor of the Mercer County Courthouse is prohibited, those spaces including the rotunda, the courtroom, the probation department, court offices, and meeting rooms.
6. Each individual staff member shall continue to be responsible for maintaining their offices and workstations by disinfecting their desks and work stations as well as high contact surfaces prior to commencement of work operations, at the close of work operations, and intermittently throughout the work operations, specifically including using appropriate disinfectant to clean desks, workstations, and high contact services, upon a person leaving the work areas and before another person enters the work area.
7. Staff members shall assist one another in maintaining all office equipment to see that it is disinfected throughout the workday.

The court restates its belief that during this public health emergency, it is necessary to maintain services to our citizens and provide them continuing access to justice through our court. The court will entertain any reasonable requests for accommodations for staff and any member of the public to that end on a case-by-case basis. The court will continue to address the public crisis with the idea of maintaining services by undertaking that responsibility without losing sight of treating people with kindness, courteousness, and respect, so that our court may provide a fair and just result to all parties whose conflicts the court addresses.

These protocols are effective May 1, 2020, until further order of the court.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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Judge Jeffrey R. Ingraham