

**FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
TRIAL DIVISION**

ADMINISTRATIVE DOCKET

No. 24 of 2021

In re: Expansion of Court Operations

ORDER

AND NOW, this 2nd day of July 2021, consistent with the terms of the June 21, 2021, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Order, No. 553 Judicial Administration Docket, and in accordance with the health and safety guidelines, protocols, and recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control, Pennsylvania Department of Health, the City of Philadelphia Department of Health, and the First Judicial District, effective July 6, 2021, it is **ORDERED AND DECREED**:

The Justice Juanita Kidd Stout Center for Criminal Justice and City Hall will be open with normal safety and security protocols. Mask wearing will be optional for all employees and visitors who are **fully vaccinated** in all FJD facilities effective Monday, June 28th, 2021. Employees and visitors who are not fully vaccinated are still required to wear masks in all FJD facilities and work areas. All social distancing requirements in all public and work areas including elevators have been lifted effective Monday, June 28th, 2021, however, social distancing requirements may still be required in courtrooms. Mask wearing is still encouraged for all persons while inside FJD facilities for your own comfort and safety.

Court proceedings will expand as follows:

Civil Trial Division

1. **Civil Jury Trials** – All civil jury trials shall continue to proceed in person subject to the Court’s protocols published on the Court’s website and entitled, “Resumption of In-Person Jury Trials During the COVID-19 Judicial Emergency.” Such protocols are updated as appropriate, and counsel must review the most current published protocols prior to commencing a jury trial.

2. **Civil Non-Jury Trials** – Consistent with the availability of judicial resources including courtrooms not already in use for in-person civil jury trials, civil non-jury trials shall proceed in-person as of September 1, 2021. Prior to September 1, 2021, civil non-jury trials shall continue via Advanced Communication Technology, unless otherwise ordered.

3. **Arbitration Proceedings** – Arbitration proceedings shall proceed in person as of September 1, 2021. Prior to September 1, 2021, arbitration proceedings shall continue via Advanced Communication Technology, unless otherwise ordered.

4. **Case Management and Pre-trial Conferences** – Civil case management and pre-trial conferences shall proceed in person as of September 1, 2021. Prior to September 1, 2021, civil case management and pre-trial conferences shall proceed via Advanced Communication Technology unless otherwise ordered.

5. **Discovery Court** – Civil discovery court shall proceed via Advanced Communication Technology.

6. **Hearings on motions, petitions, and Rules to Show Cause** – All hearings on motions, petitions, and Rules to Show Cause shall proceed via Advanced Communication Technology unless otherwise ordered.

7. **Settlement Conferences** - All settlement conferences – including settlement conferences by a trial judge or by a judge pro tem – shall proceed via Advanced Communication Technology unless otherwise ordered.

8. **Office of Judicial Records and Complex Litigation Center** – Effective July 6, 2021, The Office of Judicial Records and the Complex Litigation Center shall be open to the public, without appointment, under normal business hours.

Commerce Program

1. **In Person Proceedings**- The Commerce Program will resume In-person operations. When necessary and appropriate to ensure access and due process, remote and hybrid proceedings will be available at the sole discretion of each individual Commerce Judge and upon consideration of any parties or counsel.

2. The matrix below further details the Commerce program proceedings.

Case Management Conferences	In-person or Zoom	City Hall 531
Discovery Hearings	In-person or Zoom	Courtroom TBD
Injunctions and other Hearings	In-person or Zoom	Courtroom TBD
Status Conferences	In-person or Zoom	Courtroom TBD
Settlement Conferences	In-person or Zoom	Off-Site
Sequestration Conferences	Virtual or telephonic	Off-Site
Pre-Trial Conferences	In-person or Zoom	Courtroom TBD
Non-Jury Trials	In-person or Zoom	Courtroom TBD
Jury Trials	In-person	Courtroom TBD

All Advanced Communication Technology for Civil proceedings will be via Zoom.

Criminal Trial Division

1. **Courthouse Admittance**- The Justice Juanita Kidd Stout Center for Criminal Justice will be open to the public as of July 6, 2021. Prior approval will no longer be required.

2. **Defendants in Custody**- Only those inmates who test negative for COVID-19 at the prison will be transported to the Stout Center. The number of inmates transported from the prison to the Stout Center will increase every two weeks in increments of 30, taking into consideration safety and health concerns and guidance. On July 6, 2021, the transport number will increase from 90 to 120 and continue to increase to its pre-pandemic transport number by then end of the month.

3. **Criminal Jury Trials-** All criminal jury trials shall continue to proceed in person subject to the Court’s protocols published on the Court’s website and entitled, “Resumption of In-Person Jury Trials. During, the COVID-19 Judicial Emergency.” Such protocols are updated as appropriate, and counsel must review the most current published protocols prior to commencing a jury trial.

4. **All Other Criminal Proceedings-** Consistent with the availability of judicial resources including courtrooms not already in use for in-person criminal jury trials, proceedings shall be held in person or as directed in further Notices to the Bar. The continued use of Advanced Communication Technology and other video proceedings shall continue until further Order of Court.

5. **Adult Probation and Parole and Pre-Trial Services-** To allow for proper notification of scheduled office visits to all of those under supervision, effective, Monday, August 2, 2021, 714 Market Street will officially be open to the Public for in-person contact with clients.

Advance notifications via telephone and letters shall be implemented to ensure proper reporting notice.

Other means of contact through phone reporting and Zoom contact will continue to be a part of the official contact. Field visits have resumed and will continue to expand.

The Trial Division’s Court Protocols and Guidelines for the Expansion of Court Operations can be found on the First Judicial District’s Website at www.courts.phila.gov/covid-19 and may be amended periodically.

BY THE COURT:

/s/ Lisette Shirdan-Harris

**HONORABLE LISETTE SHIRDAN-HARRIS
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
TRIAL DIVISION**