



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CHRISTIAN COUNTY

SECOND ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE FOR CRIMINAL DEFENSE COUNSEL

Please see the Supreme Court Order issued on May 4, 2020, the Administrative Order of the Christian County Circuit Court issued May 8, 2020, and the first Administrative Guidance for Criminal Defense Counsel issued March 24, 2020. Given the severe occupancy restrictions placed on the Court by social distancing requirements, the Court is implementing the following new procedures for the processing of criminal cases designed to reduce the number of required appearances in Court.

While social distancing requirements are in place, only the defendant will be allowed to appear with counsel in Court, except that persons needed to provide assistance to defendants will be allowed in the courtroom with the defendant.

In both Associate Circuit Court and Circuit Court, only about ten people besides the Judge and court staff will be allowed in the courtroom at one time. Thus, counsel should anticipate some staggering of the dockets. Counsel should also anticipate they may be asked to wait in the lobby, outside or in their car until there is room in the courtroom for their matter. Patience is requested as the Court tries different strategies to conduct its dockets efficiently while being mindful of social distancing requirements.

At the time of arraignment, the case will be set for a pretrial conference and trial in Circuit Court Division 1 and 2. No other appearances in Circuit Court will be set. Hearings in Circuit Court for guilty pleas, bond issues and other routine matters must be noticed by counsel for routine dockets at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Hearings on motions to suppress and other matters requiring more extensive argument or evidence must be scheduled through the Court's clerk. Appearances will not be allowed unless previously noticed.

When a defendant is ready to enter a plea of guilty, defense counsel must file a notice of hearing and email a copy of the fully executed plea agreement, and a notice of rights, if necessary, to the Court's clerk. A plea will not be accepted on the day noticed unless the executed plea paperwork has been provided to the Court twenty-four hours in advance. Petitions to Enter a Plea of Guilty will no longer be required.

Trial dates will be firm, and continuances will be granted only for good cause shown. Negotiated pleas will not be accepted after the pretrial conference.

All questions should be emailed to the clerks of Divisions 1, 2, 3, and 4. The names and email addresses of the clerks are available through the Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association.

Date: May 8, 2020



Laura Johnson, Presiding Judge