

Coles County Courts' Notice

RE: Re-Opening Court Operations

In consideration of directives and guidelines given by the Illinois Supreme Court along with the state and local health departments, and, in an effort to balance public health and safety concerns with the need to provide our community with access to the justice system and courts, the Coles County judiciary will resume court operations starting June 1, 2020.

All persons with pending cases are directed to check the status of your court date by going online to <https://www.judici.com> for Coles County, or, by contacting the Circuit Clerk's office at 348-0516. If represented by counsel, contact your attorney. Please, do not come to the courthouse just to find out your court date --- please check online or call. Please be patient as we anticipate a large number of inquiries.

All visitors to the Coles County Courthouse should be prepared to comply with the following public health guidelines beginning June 1, 2020:

Any person entering the courthouse will be screened concerning any relevant Covid-19 symptoms. Any person who has a fever, Covid-type symptoms, or who has been exposed to a positive case in the prior 14 days should not enter the courthouse. These persons should either contact their attorney, or, contact the circuit clerk and advise that they cannot attend. Should you present to the courthouse with these symptoms, security may deny you entry and provide you with further direction.

When in the courthouse building, visitors should exercise proper safety and health measures including wearing a face mask or proper face covering and maintaining social distance spacing.

In order to limit the foot traffic in the courthouse only necessary persons will be allowed to attend court proceedings. Any person coming to court should come alone unless otherwise authorized by the judge or their attorney. Security will be authorized to ask guests to wait outside the courthouse if their presence for a case is not required or otherwise permitted by the judge.

Visitors should arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to your court hearing. Once in the courthouse, you will be directed immediately to your designated courtroom; do not wait in the hallways outside the courtroom. Once your case has concluded, you should immediately leave the courthouse through the designated exit.

Judges will also be utilizing video and telephone technology to conduct certain civil court hearings remotely so as to further limit foot traffic in the building. These can be scheduled through Court Administration ((217) 348-0538) at the discretion of the judge.

Generally, cell phones will not be allowed in the courthouse and no phones or personal belongings will be stored at security as had been done before March, 2020. Leave them at home or in your car.

It is anticipated that the courts will be resuming jury trials beginning June 30, 2020. We are aware that citizens may have reluctance in serving jury duty; Coles County will strive to provide a safe and healthy environment for our jurors so that we may provide this essential function of the courts. Should you receive a jury summons, feel free to contact the Jury Coordinator at 348-0540 with questions or concerns.

NOTE: These rules and guidelines apply to the court system. Other visitors to the courthouse should check with the office they are visiting as to any procedures or restrictions imposed by that office. These offices include probation, county clerk, treasurer, assessor, regional planning and states attorney.

Lastly, the Courts would like to thank all of the Courthouse staff and employees, as well as our court security in helping us to continuously provide our citizens access to the justice system through these difficult times.

Mark E. Bovard
Presiding Judge, Coles County