

**IN THE GENERAL SESSIONS CRIMINAL, CIVIL, AND JUVENILE COURTS FOR
CAMPBELL COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

) 366 21 TIME 3:00 P
)
) DATE: _____
) GENERAL SESSIONS COURT—CAMPBELL COUNTY
) BOBBY W. VANN CLERK
Cameron Foster
DEP. CLERK (D.C.)

ORDER OF PROCEDURE FOR THE MONTHS OF MARCH AND APRIL 2021

There being an Order from the Tennessee Supreme Court limiting all in-person Court proceedings at this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic and mandating certain procedures for all persons conducting court business, the proceedings in Campbell County General Sessions Criminal, Civil and Juvenile Courts, beginning immediately, are hereby modified as follows:

PREFERENCE FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING OF ALL HEARINGS

The preferred method at this time for holding any proceeding in the General Sessions or Juvenile Courts of Campbell County, Tennessee, shall be *via* video conferencing. More specifically, the Court prefers that all parties participate via “Zoom” video conferencing. The “Zoom” app is a free app available to download to any mobile device, tablet, or computer which allows internet access.

REGISTRATION PRIOR TO COURT IF ATTENDING COURT ELECTRONICALLY

Once the “Zoom” app is downloaded, the person wanting to participate electronically in Court must register to do so, prior to their court date. This can be accomplished in the following manner:

- Defendants who have an attorney must contact their attorney to register.
- Plaintiffs who have an attorney must contact their attorney to register.
- Victims or Witnesses on a criminal case must contact either the District Attorney’s Office (423-562-4991) or the attorney who requested their appearance to register.
- DCS workers must contact their attorney to register.
- Others who do not have an attorney or who do not fit one of the above descriptions can go to www.campbellcountycourts.com and complete and submit the “Contact” information to register.

Prior to each General Sessions Court date in the months of March or April 2021, the General Sessions docket will be posted on the Courts' website at www.campbellcountycourts.com. All court participants in either General Sessions or Juvenile Court, whether they be attorneys, defendants, plaintiffs, victims, witnesses, members of the public or media, case workers, or other interested parties, are expected to first consider whether they can appear electronically in Court rather than in-person on that particular case. Moreover, all participants are expected to appear electronically, rather than in-person, if they are able to do so.

If any person on any court date is unable to participate electronically, then the following steps shall be taken:

REGISTRATION PRIOR TO COURT IF ATTENDING IN-PERSON

The Clerk of the Court shall present a docket for each court date to the Security Officer at the entrance to the Justice Center and to the Judge's Office. Each party, victim, witness, member of the media, member of the bar, or other interested individual who is appearing in-person rather than appearing electronically for Court shall present themselves at the Justice Center entrance and register their name and mobile phone number with the officer stationed at the entrance door. The officer should also request from each person registering to indicate for which docketed case they are appearing. The officer will then notate the docket number for the stated case next to each name on the registration list and on the corresponding case on the docket. All registered parties shall be required to remain present outside of the building in their vehicles or in open spaces at least six (6) feet away from any other person.

Periodically, the registering officer shall provide updated registration lists and dockets to the Judge. Copies will also be provided to counsel.

COURT PROCEEDINGS

The General Sessions/Juvenile Courtroom has rows of pews in the gallery where pews are marked with yellow tape on the back of the bench. Only one (1) person shall sit where one (1) piece of yellow tape marks their seat. [The only exception to this rule is if the defendant charged in a case is *a juvenile*, then one (1) parent or legal guardian from their same household shall be allowed to sit with them.]

The General Sessions/Juvenile Courtroom also has two (2) rows of pews in the front of the gallery near the bar which are marked with orange tape on the back of the seat. These spaces are designated for probation officers, inmates, interpreters, physically disabled persons, self-represented persons filing petitions, victim advocates, members of the media or public, plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses, or attorneys. Only one (1) such person may sit where one (1) piece of orange tape marks their seat.

Only one (1) person from any household or party will be allowed in the courtroom at a time. The only exception to this rule is if the party to a case is a juvenile, then the juvenile and one (1) parent or legal guardian will be permitted. All persons must maintain a distance of at least six (6) feet away from any other person not residing in their household.

If a party to a case has witnesses whom they intend to call or other interested parties or family members who desire to appear in Court, those witnesses or other persons shall remain outside of the Justice Center (preferably in their vehicle) unless and until the Court calls them to enter the courtroom. There shall be no children under five (5) years of age in the courtroom without the express permission of the presiding Judge. When a case is called, the parties, victims, witnesses, or other individuals will be contacted using the information previously registered by designated court personnel.

Once the taped seats in the gallery are at maximum capacity in the General Sessions/Juvenile Courtroom, no additional persons will be admitted without the express permission of the Judge and without the necessary exchange of persons in and out of the courtroom taking place to maintain the limit of maximum persons permitted in the courtroom.

Once Court has opened, the Judge will notify court officers to call one (1) or more cases designated by the Judge. (More than one case may be called, depending on the number of persons involved in each case who are physically present at the courthouse, but in no case will more than the maximum of all taped seats in the gallery be allowed in the courtroom without the express permission of the Judge). The parties, victims, witnesses, or other individuals will be contacted using the information previously registered by designated court personnel and one (1) person from that party will be requested to come to the front entrance. As noted previously, only one (1) person from any household, party, or vehicle will be allowed in the courthouse at a time, and all persons must maintain a distance of at least six (6) feet away from any other person not residing in their household once they exit a vehicle.

Each individual shall be required to have had their temperature taken before being permitted to enter the courthouse. Any individual having a temperature of 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit or more shall not be permitted to enter the courthouse. The corresponding case will be continued to a future date as necessary. (See "General Provisions," below, for more details.) If individuals have a mask or a layered cloth which is able to cover their nose and mouth, then they shall bring it with them to the courthouse and shall wear it at all times while not inside the vehicle in which they arrived. Individuals who do not have a mask will be provided one at the courthouse for as long as supplies last. Individuals shall submit to a questionnaire/health screening prior to entry. Failure to complete any of the mandatory conditions described in this paragraph will result in denial of admittance. Individuals may also be denied admittance based on their responses to the health screening.

Upon resolution of the first case (or cases), the parties, victims, witnesses, etc. involved in that case will be required to exit the courtroom and building in an orderly but immediate process, while staying at least six (6) feet apart from any other person at all times. Thereafter the next case(s) will be called.

Once one in-person hearing is concluded and the persons depart, the Judge shall at this point notify court personnel for the next case(s) to be called to begin the entry process outlined above. This process shall continue until all the scheduled cases are concluded or until Court recesses or adjourns, in the discretion of the Court.

COURT CONDUCT

On some court dates, while conducting cases as outlined above, it will be necessary for attorneys to have designated spaces to confer with their witnesses or clients or with unrepresented litigants. There are large benches in the hallway outside the courtroom and there is one long hallway between the Criminal Courtroom and the jail where this can be accomplished. The Attorney shall be at one end of the bench and the other person shall be at the opposite end; otherwise, the Attorney shall be at one end of the hallway and the other person shall be at least six (6) feet away from the Attorney. Attorneys for defendants participating via video conferencing are already (or otherwise are expected to become), familiar with how to “host” the video conference so that the Court can be excluded from confidential conversations between attorney and client. All Court participants shall frequently wash their hands with soap and water as provided in the restrooms, especially after touching or handling any paper or object, and shall use hand sanitizer which is located throughout the courthouse and is mounted on the wall upon entry into the courtroom.

All persons are required, pursuant to Order of the Tennessee Supreme Court, to wear nose-and-mouth-covering masks or layered cloths during court proceedings and during interactions with other persons (such as court clerks) in and around the courthouse while conducting court business.

All persons appearing in Court via video conferencing are expected to abide by usual courtroom decorum while present or else may be subject to the penalties for contempt, just as if they had been physically present in the courtroom.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

All individuals are directed that if they have had a cough, a fever, or trouble breathing at any time in the past two weeks, or if they have been exposed to any person who has exhibited these symptoms in the past two weeks, then they SHALL NOT appear at the Justice Center on any of these court dates. Such persons are directed to notify the Clerk’s Office by telephone (423-562-2624) before the scheduled court hearing, and their case will be rescheduled.

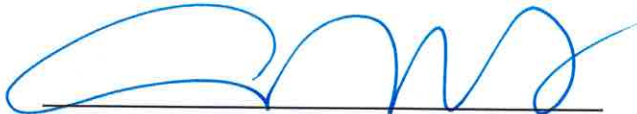
All individuals are directed that if they, or any person they’ve been around for the past 14 days, have undergone testing for any virus in the past 14 days, then they SHALL NOT appear at the Justice Center on any of these court dates. Such persons are directed to notify the Clerk’s Office by telephone (423-562-2624) before the scheduled court hearing, and their case will be rescheduled.

All individuals are directed that if they or anyone they've been exposed to in the past 14 days have been told by a health care worker to quarantine or to isolate themselves for any reason in the last 14 days, then they SHALL NOT appear at the Justice Center on any of these court dates. Such persons are directed to notify the Clerk's Office by telephone (423-562-2624) before the scheduled court hearing, and their case will be rescheduled.

In an effort to manage the flow of persons into the courtroom while offering better, more personalized service to the public, a time docket has been instituted in the Campbell County General Sessions criminal and Juvenile Courts (but not in General Sessions civil Court). For more information on what time a particular case is set to be heard, interested persons can view the latest docketing orders at www.campbellcountycourts.com, or they may refer to the general guidelines which are posted on the fence in the parking lot outside the east entrance to the Justice Center. All cases involving *incarcerated* defendants are set for hearing at 9:00 a.m., *regardless* of the spelling of defendant's last name.

The overall goal of this Order is to continue the business of the Court while limiting in-person contact as much as possible, consistent with constitutional provisions.

It is so ORDERED this 26th day of March, 20 21.



Amanda H. Sammons, JUDGE
CAMPBELL COUNTY GENERAL SESSIONS
AND JUVENILE COURTS