

NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts



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Arizona Courts Statement on COVID-19

PHOENIX – The Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts provides the following information in response to the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus disease.

Courts around Arizona are being instructed to take steps to reduce the number of people entering courthouses to slow the potential spread of COVID-19 or other communicable diseases. Signs are recommended to instruct individuals not to enter courthouses if they feel ill or have reason to believe they have been exposed to someone who is ill. Individuals who have health concerns with entering a courthouse for a scheduled event should contact the court directly for further information and direction.

Examples several courts have already taken to reduce nonessential use of courthouses include postponing school tours, programs, clinics, and classes. While law libraries and self-help centers remain open, courts are applying enhanced cleaning procedures and social distancing to minimize the spread of disease. Other services and programs have been moved to telephonic or web-based interactions. Members of the public should check with offsite legal clinics or program providers to see if they are moving to telephonic formats instead of holding in-person events.

Courts are encouraged to conduct various case events telephonically when feasible. Each court's capacity for telephonic appearances varies. As a result, attorneys and self-represented litigants should contact the judge's office assigned to their case to verify the ability to hold a telephonic hearing. Attorneys are encouraged to participate in telephonic hearings when possible. Individual judges will determine which hearings require in-person appearance and which can proceed by telephone.

Jury service continues, as health officials have advised there is no need to cancel jury service at this time. However, jury commissioners and judges are prepared to address situations where jurors appear ill, report feeling ill, or report exposure to someone who is or might be ill.

Courts are instructed to follow recommended practices for cleaning and social distancing in areas where jurors gather, such as waiting areas, jury boxes, and deliberation areas. Examples include: Handwashing signs, hand sanitizer and wipes, single-use paper and writing tools, movement in smaller groups, single-use badges, wiping down surfaces, and alternatives to passing exhibits to the jury.

Arizona is currently one of the least-affected states in the nation for coronavirus. However, if the situation worsens, the Chief Justice will authorize the county presiding judges to take the necessary steps to continue operating courts in a safe manner.

Consistent with public health recommendations, courts are instructed to increase the cleaning frequency of public areas such as elevators, restrooms, courtrooms, and jury assembly and deliberation rooms, using an anti-viral product identified by the Center for Disease Control to combat COVID-19. Members of the public and judicial branch staff are encouraged to follow best practices for minimizing risk, including regular hand washing, maintaining social distancing, limiting contact with symptomatic individuals, increasing sterilization of frequently-touched surfaces, and covering coughs and sneezing with a tissue, not your hands. Court users and the public should maintain contact with individual courts for more information.

Where possible, individuals with court cases or who are seeking to file documents with the courts are encouraged to electronically file, use external filing depository boxes, or to mail their filings. Methods of available filing vary by court and court information is available online at <https://www.azcourts.gov/AZ-Courts/AZ-Courts-Locator>.

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