

Limited Operations to Resume in Three Currently Closed Courthouses

The Connecticut Judicial Branch is targeting the partial resumption of operations in three courthouses starting Monday, June 8, 2020, guided first and foremost by the overarching goal of protecting the health and safety of the public, bar, staff and judges, Chief Court Administrator Patrick L. Carroll III said today.



The three courthouses are: the Middlesex Judicial District Courthouse in Middletown, Rockville’s Geographical Area No. 19 Courthouse, and the Litchfield Judicial District Courthouse at Torrington.

Judge Carroll cautioned, “Given the nature of the pandemic, plans can change but our current expectation is to resume limited operations on June 8.”

“This pandemic has created many challenges for the Judicial Branch but it has also created new opportunities – opportunities to develop and leverage innovative technologies to allow us to do more court business remotely, resulting in greater convenience and greater efficiency,” Judge Carroll said.

“The Judicial Branch we left behind as this crisis emerged will not be the same Judicial Branch we return to,” he added. “Masks, social distancing, hand sanitizers, limitations on the number of people allowed in courtrooms and courthouses, and enhanced sanitization protocols are all going to be with us for the foreseeable future. The remote processing and handling of court matters via video conference will all now be routine components of the court system. The Judicial Branch, in a short time, has significantly increased its virtual capacity and, with the required funding to do so, our hope is to expand virtual capabilities across all divisions, criminal, family, civil and juvenile matters.”

Ten courts have remained open through the pandemic: the Supreme and Appellate Courts, the Judicial District courthouses in Bridgeport, New Britain, New Haven, New London and the Geographical Area Courthouses in Hartford (No. 14) and Waterbury (No. 4); and the juvenile courts in Hartford and Bridgeport. Beyond these locations and the three courthouses resuming partial operations effective June 8, all other courts will remain closed until further notice.

Priority 1 business – for example, arraignments of defendants held on bond; arraignments of defendants in any domestic violence cases, emergency child custody matters and juvenile detention hearings, and significantly, all other emergency matters – will continue to be handled in the open courthouses. With the partial resumption of limited court operations in these three, cases from those courts that had been transferred elsewhere will return to their original jurisdiction. Other logistics include the following:

- In the physical courthouses, the Judicial Branch will continue to concentrate on Priority 1 and emergency business.
- Juvenile Court business will resume in the Middletown, New Britain, and Torrington courthouses, effective June 8. Cases from the Waterbury Juvenile Court will go to Torrington; cases from the Waterford Juvenile Court will go to Middletown.
- The days and hours of court business at all open courthouses will be Mondays, from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and on Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. All courts will be closed on Tuesdays and Thursdays until further notice. These days and hours of operation are subject to further change in the coming days and weeks.
- Cases from the Geographical Area Courthouse No. 12 in Manchester will be transferred to the Rockville Courthouse until further notice.

Judge Carroll noted that other developments, including updated information regarding the Branch's expansion of remote capabilities and functions, will continue to be posted on the Judicial Branch website and tweeted.

"This remains a fluid situation, and frankly, there are some issues for which we don't yet have solutions," he said. "As such, our planning process will be deliberate and careful, guided by the desire to provide for the health and safety of everyone who works in or enters a courthouse. There is no other way to do it."

Judge Carroll also thanked Deputy Chief Court Administrator Elizabeth A. Bozzuto, Chief Administrative Judges James W. Abrams (civil), Michael A. Albis (family), Joan K. Alexander (criminal), and Bernadette Conway (juvenile), and employees for all their hard work.

"We have made remarkable progress considering the circumstances, and it would not have occurred without the dedication of our judges and employees," he added.