

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
UNIFIED COURT OF JUSTICE
FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2021-03

In accordance with Supreme Court of Kentucky Orders 2021-16 and 2021-7 (both dated May 18, 2021), the Circuit Court of the 15th Judicial Circuit of the Kentucky Court of Justice will conduct proceedings as follows, beginning June 1, 2021.

1. Access to the Circuit Courtroom –

- a. All persons attending in-person Circuit Court proceedings shall wear a mask at all times after entering the building **unless** proof of COVID-19 vaccination is presented to court security upon entry.
- b. No person shall be required to produce proof of vaccination to enter the building. However, if proof of vaccination is not voluntarily produced, a mask must be worn. No unvaccinated, unmasked persons will be allowed entry.

2. Criminal Cases – All criminal cases shall be conducted in person.

- a. Defendants who are not in custody shall report to the Circuit courtroom at 8:30 a.m. on their scheduled hearing date. These Defendants will be called first, and must enter the courtroom and remain seated until their case is called.
- b. Defendants who are incarcerated will continue to appear remotely from the County Detention Center via courtroom videoconferencing technology, i.e., JAVS. Counsel shall be present in the Circuit Courtroom. In-custody Defendants will be heard immediately following out-of-custody Defendants.
- c. The Circuit Court Clerk in each county shall be responsible for recording and maintaining the record of all criminal proceedings.
- d. Owen County Circuit Criminal matters will revert to being heard on Tuesday mornings at 8:30 a.m. (rather than Monday afternoons at 1:00 p.m.).

3. Grand Jury Proceedings –

- a. In-person meetings shall take place in the designated courtroom in each County on the first motion day of the month.
- b. All jury panel terms shall be continued to February 2022.

4. Civil Cases –

- a. All civil matters will continue to be heard by Zoom on the civil dates provided in Administrative Order 2020-5. In other words, there is no change to the civil docket dates and times.
- b. Attorneys shall continue to notice motions for a regularly scheduled circuit court day so that filings can be properly tracked in the KY Courts system. All Motions shall be emailed to the Circuit Court at KrissySchlueter@KyCourts.net upon filing. The *Motion to Schedule Virtual Hearing* form must be thoroughly completed to include all parties and attached to all Motions to assist the Court in scheduling remote hearings by Zoom. The Court will not require Parties represented by counsel to attend Zoom hearings, but attorneys may have their client(s) present with them by Zoom if desired. *Pro se* Parties will be contacted by the Court and provided the Zoom link.
- c. Any matter requiring a hearing will be conducted by Zoom, unless the Court determines an in-person hearing is necessary.

5. Adoption and Termination of Parental Rights Cases –

- a. Attorneys and/or Parties in cases that are ready for a final hearing shall contact the Court and request a date and time for an in-person hearing.
- b. All motions will continue to be heard during regularly scheduled civil motion hours.

6. Emergency Protective Orders – EPO cases within the purview of the Circuit Court shall be scheduled on a case-by-case basis for Zoom hearings. Typically, these hearings will occur in the afternoon of a regularly scheduled motion day. The Court will work with the circuit Clerk to schedule these matters and get the Zoom information to the Parties.

7. Domestic Relations Commissioner/Family Court Cases –

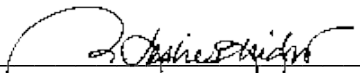
- a. The Domestic Relations Commissioner shall be responsible for setting dates and times for in-person hearings. Attendees shall comply with Section 1, **Access to the Circuit Courtroom**, *supra*.
- b. The Circuit Court Clerk shall be responsible for recording and maintaining the record of all proceedings before the Domestic Relations Commissioner.

8. Jury Trials –

- a. Pursuant to Supreme Court Order 2021-17, jury trials may resume.

- b. The Court must give priority to criminal matters where Defendants are in custody and awaiting trial. Therefore, the Court anticipates that civil jury trials will not be scheduled until sometime in 2022. Civil jury trials that were previously scheduled and delayed due to COVID-19 will be scheduled first. If the Parties are willing to forgo a jury trial to expedite the resolution of their case, the Court will schedule civil matters for bench trials as appropriate.
- c. The Parties are encouraged to enter agreed scheduling orders setting deadlines for discovery, dispositive motions, and mediation. The Court will enter such orders upon motion if the Parties cannot agree.
- d. The court will not grant a civil jury trial date unless all discovery is complete and mediation has been attempted.
- e. All jury panels terms will be continued to February 2022.

DATED this 24th day of May, 2021.



Judge R. Leslie Knight
Fifteenth Judicial Circuit