**THE MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES’ RESPONSE TO THE COMITE MARITIME INTERNATIONAL’S INQUIRY REGARDING COURT PROCEDURES AND FLAG ADMINISTRATIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**1. Are the Courts in your jurisdiction open and functioning as per normal?[[1]](#footnote-1)**

The United States Federal Court system consists of the United States Supreme Court, thirteen (13) Courts of Appeal, and various United States District Courts.[[2]](#footnote-2) As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its spread, the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeals, and the District Courts have all experienced differing levels of interruption to their functioning capacity. We summarize as follows each Court’s current level of function in light of the COVID-19 pandemic:

**Summary of Functioning Status of the Supreme Court of the United States**

Oral arguments currently scheduled for the April 2020 session (April 20-22 and April 27-29) are postponed. Considering public health and safety guidance, the Court will consider rescheduling some cases from the March and April sessions before the end of the Term. The Court will consider a range of options and alternatives if arguments cannot be held in the Courtroom before the end of the Term. The Court will continue to proceed with the resolution of all cases previously argued during the current Term. All opinions will be posted on the Court’s Website. The Court continues to hold its regularly scheduled conferences and to issue Order Lists. The Court remains open for official business, but most Court personnel are teleworking. The Court remains closed to the public until further notice.

**Summary of Functioning Status of the Courts of Appeals**

* First Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The sitting of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit scheduled for April 6 through April 9, 2020 is cancelled. Deadlines for most non-emergency filing (e.g., briefs (including paper copies)), appendices, and petitions for rehearing) due to be filed between March 26, 2020 and April 24, 2020 are extended thirty (30) days.
* Second Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The regular argued appeals and motions calendars continue to be heard as scheduled, however all filing dates and other deadlines between March 16, 2020 and May 17, 2020 are extended by 21 days. The Court will hear all oral arguments through teleconference.
* Third Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Court remains open and operational at this time. The Clerk’s Office is conducting remote operations and will continue to process all filings submitted to the Court. Counsel and parties who are registered CM/ECF filers should continue to submit case filings through the Court’s CM/ECF system. Oral arguments will go forward as scheduled. Parties may request to appear by audio-conference by filing a motion. If a panel determines that argument should be presented telephonically, the Clerk’s Office will provide counsel with audio-conference instructions.
* Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Court remains open at this time. All oral argument scheduled during the Court’s March 17-20, April 7, 2020, and May 5-8, 2020 sessions have been suspended. Cases will be continued for argument at a later session, scheduled for argument by video-conference or teleconference, or submitted on the briefs, at the discretion of the panels in each case.
* Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit suspended all requirements to file paper copies with the clerk’s office until further notice. If justified, an extension may be requested from the Clerk’s Office. All outstanding deadlines for incarcerated and nonincarcerated pro se filers are extended for 30 days after their due dates. In-person oral arguments scheduled in New Orleans for March, 2020 and April, 2020 have been cancelled. Mail operations for the Clerk’s Office are suspended until further notice.
* Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Court is open for business. In-person oral arguments have been cancelled for the weeks of April 27, 2020 and May 4, 2020. Counsel have been informed, and the Court will reschedule some arguments to be heard remotely. All remote arguments will be recorded and posted to the Court’s website on the same day the arguments are held.
* Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals
  + All cases scheduled for oral argument from March 30, 2020 through the end of April 2020, will be argued telephonically by counsel.  The Court is operating with reduced staff. The Courtroom will be closed to the public. Arguments will be recorded and posted on the Court’s website. If all parties agree among themselves to waive oral argument, they may jointly file a motion with the Court seeking permission to do so.
* Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + Clerk’s Office is closed to the public, individuals coming to Courthouse to file a document will be directed where to deposit by Security Officers. Eagleton Court House is open to general public but limited to the lobby. Requirement of paper copies is suspended.
* Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + Arguments currently scheduled in March, April, and May 2020 are being evaluated one at a time and Orders will issue in those cases giving direction to the parties. Because the national response to the pandemic has disrupted services of all kinds, the Court will extend non-jurisdictional filing dates as needed. If a party needs an extension of time to file a brief due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 virus, the party must file a notice with the Court. The filing of this notice will result in the automatic extension of the briefing schedule by 60 days, unless the Court notifies the parties otherwise.
* Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Byron White United States Courthouse is closed to the public. Until further notice, access to the Courthouse is restricted to Judges, Court staff, Court security officers, and service providers with official business with the Court (e.g., the United States Postal Service, and contractors working on pending projects) subject to certain restrictions. All cases set for argument in April 2020 and May 2020 will be argued telephonically, submitted on the briefs, or rescheduled for in-person argument at a later date.
* Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals
  + Parties who have filed their brief and appendices through CM/ECF will temporarily not be required to file paper copies of briefs. Panels are authorized to hear any or all oral arguments by audio or teleconferencing instead of in person and those hearings will be live streamed where feasible.
* Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia
  + All in-person onsite oral arguments are suspended pending further Order of the Court. Each panel scheduled to hear argument on a particular day will determine for each scheduled case whether: (1) Argument in the scheduled case or cases will proceed by teleconference; (2) Argument in the scheduled case or cases will be postponed until a later date; (3) The scheduled case or cases will be decided without oral argument.
* Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit
  + National Courts Building complex limits public access to the lobby. No public access to Clerk’s office, filings must be submitted by U.S.P.S. or deposit in Court’s night box. All requirements to provide paper copies are suspended from March 20, 2020 until further notice. No alteration of deadlines in any case, but cases scheduled for argument during April 2020 will be conducted via telephone.

**Summary of Functioning Status of the Federal District Courts**

* Alabama[[3]](#footnote-3)
  + Middle District: No Civil or Criminal trials until April 16th. No Grand Jury proceedings until April 16th. Hearings may be conducted telephonically or by video conferencing. The Montgomery, Dothan, and Opelika Courthouses will remain open. Staff in the Clerk's Office will be available by telephone, mail will be received, and intake desks will remain open for filing although social distancing measures will be enforced.
  + Northern District: All civil and criminal jury trials, or any procedure requiring jurors are continued until further Order of the Court. Non-jury trials are continued pending further Order of the Court. Civil proceedings will be conducted as scheduled by phone or video conferencing. All currently unexpired deadlines and briefing schedules are stayed for 14 days.
  + Southern District: The Court authorizes the use of video teleconferencing, or telephone conferencing for hearings, arraignments, and other procedures
* Alaska
  + All non-case related activities scheduled are canceled until further notice. As of March 30, 2020 all civil matters are stayed for 30 days, unless otherwise Ordered by the presiding Judge in a specific case. All criminal and civil jury trials and related trial-specific deadlines scheduled to commence on or before May 1, 2020, are continued pending further Order of the assigned Judge. No hearings scheduled between March 23, 2020, and May 1, 2020 will go forward except for emergency matters. All in-person status hearings for civil cases scheduled between March 23, 2020, and May 1, 2020, are cancelled. In those cases, counsel shall file a written joint status report. All civil filing deadlines are stayed pending further Order of the assigned Judge. This authorization is effective for 90 days unless earlier terminated.
* Arizona
  + As of March 27, 2020, all proceedings, except those Court proceedings deemed necessary by the Court, are continued until further Order of the Court. Such necessary matters include: initial appearances, arraignments, preliminary and detention hearings, changes of plea, sentencings, and necessary revocation hearings. Individual Judges may hold hearings in civil matters as they deem necessary in the safest manner possible. Hearings deemed necessary by the Court will be scheduled and conducted by video teleconference or telephone to the extent possible. All civil and criminal jury trials scheduled to commence on or before May 4, 2020, are continued pending further Order of the Court.
* Arkansas
  + Eastern District: All jury trials and grand jury proceedings are postponed until April 30, 2020. Hearings, conferences, and bench trials will continue, but should do so via telephone or video conference when practicable.
  + Western District: All trials (bench and jury) and grand jury proceedings are postponed until May 1, 2020. Video or telephone conference for other proceedings are at the discretion of presiding Judge. Public business hours for all divisions is limited to from 9:00 am -3:30 pm.
* California
  + Northern District: No jury trial will commence before May 1, 2020. Any trial dates currently scheduled during that period are cancelled. All civil matters will be decided on the papers, or if the assigned Judge believes a hearing is necessary, the hearing will be by telephone or videoconference. Any requirement that personnel in the United States Marshals Service assigned to the Northern District of California effect personal service of process for any cases pending in this District or any other District, is suspended until further Order of the Court.
  + Eastern District: Through May 1, 2020 all of the Court’s civil matters will be decided on the papers, or if the assigned Judge believes a hearing is necessary, the hearing will be by telephone or videoconference. This applies to all matters including motion hearings, case management conferences, pretrial conferences and settlement conferences. The Court will not call in jurors for service in civil or criminal jury trials until May 1, 2020. All civil and criminal jury trials in the Eastern District of California scheduled to begin during this time period are continued pending further Order of the Court.
  + Central District: In civil cases, no hearings will go forward except for emergency time-sensitive matters, such as requests for temporary restraining Orders and preliminary injunctions, as Ordered by the assigned judicial officer. Any hearings on emergency civil matters will proceed telephonically only. The Court will not call in jurors for service in civil or criminal jury trials until April 13, 2020 or otherwise Ordered by the Court. The Court may issue other Orders concerning future continuances as necessary and appropriate. Until further notice, the Court grants to mediators the authority to excuse a party, a party’s representative, or an attorney from in-person attendance required at a mediation conducted under General Order No. 11-10.
  + Southern District: All trial-specific deadlines in pending criminal cases, including those for filing motions *in limine* and jury instructions, exchanging exhibits, providing notice of expert witnesses, and completing the depositions of material witnesses, are continued until April 16, 2020. Individual District Judges may continue trial-specific deadlines in civil cases at their discretion. In civil cases, the personal appearance of counsel, parties, witnesses, or other non-Court personnel is excused, unless they are Ordered to appear in person by a judicial officer. With the exception of jury trials, Judges will retain discretion to schedule and hold proceedings, hearings, and conferences telephonically or by video conferencing, as permitted by law. In civil cases, documents are not to be filed in person at the Courthouse. Counsel and parties should not come to the Courthouse or send others to the Courthouse to file or submit documents that can be mailed or filed electronically.
* Colorado
  + The Court is open for business. The District Court clerk’s office intake counter is closed to public entry until further notice beginning Monday, March 30, 2020. All civil and criminal trials through May 1, 2020 are postponed. Hearings will be held remotely when possible. Only persons with official Court business may enter the Courthouses until further notice. To the extent practicable, the District’s judicial officers are encouraged to reschedule hearings or to convert hearings to telephonic appearances in an effort to minimize the need for persons to travel to the Court.
* Connecticut
  + All civil and criminal jury trials and jury selections scheduled to start through May 15, 2020 are postponed until further notice. Grand jury proceedings are suspended through May 15, 2020. The Courthouses will remain open for all other business. The clerk’s office is closed to the public until further notice, and all manual Court filings can be made at a designated box in the entrance lobby of each Courthouse.
* Delaware
  + The District of Delaware is open. All civil and criminal jury selections and trials scheduled to begin before April 30, 2020 are continued pending further Order of the Court. Courts will conduct conferences and hearings by telephone when possible and will consider any request to change a scheduled in-person proceeding to a telephone proceeding.
* Florida
  + Middle District: All jury trials in the Jacksonville Division scheduled to begin before May 31, 2020, are continued pending further Order of the Court. All jury trials in the Orlando division scheduled to begin before June 30, 2020 are postponed. Certain peoples (including, those who have had contact with ill people, who have been instructed to quarantine, who have travelled to certain other areas, or those who have COVID-19 like symptoms) are barred from entering the Courts in the District. The Clerk’s Office’s public intake areas are closed. Litigants without access to the Court’s electronic filing system must use a linked form to submit filings. Paper documents can also be submitted to the public drop boxes outside of each Clerk’s office. Judges in the Middle District are authorized to use video conferencing, or telephonic conferencing if video conferencing is not reasonably available for certain hearings.
  + Northern District: All Courts are closed to the public, excepting those required to attend Court hearings, trials, or other matters requiring in-person attendance. The public intake counter is not open to the public. If an individual cannot use the Court’s electronic filing system, they must submit non-emergency filings by mail. If a paper emergency filing is required, the filer must contact the Clerk’s office to notify the Court and make arrangements to submit the emergency filing. Until further notice, all initial appearances, detention hearings, and arraignments will be conducted via video teleconferencing. When possible, in person hearing have been converted to telephonic of video hearings. All jury trials and grand jury proceedings were cancelled for the month of March.
  + Southern District: The Clerk’s Office public intake areas are open with limited hours. All jury trials scheduled to commence on or after March 30, 2020, are continued until July 6, 2020. All grand jury sessions are continued until April 27, 2020. All trial specific deadlines in criminal cases scheduled to commence before July 6, 2020 are continued pending further Order of the Court. Individual Judges may continue to hold hearings, conferences, and bench trials in the exercise of their discretion and are strongly encouraged to conduct Court proceedings by telephone or video conference.
* Guam
  + All civil jury selection and trials scheduled to begin before April 26, 2020 are continued pending further Order of the Court. Individual Judges may continue trial-specific deadlines in civil cases at their discretion, and may continue to hold hearings, conferences, and bench trials at their discretion. Judges are strongly encouraged to use telephone or video conferencing where practicable.
* Georgia
  + Northern District: No jurors will be summoned in any Division of the District and all jury trials, including any trial specific deadlines, will be continued until May 15, 2020. No grand jurors will be summoned and all grand jury proceedings in the District will be continued until May 15, 2020. The Rome and Gainesville public counters are close until further notice. The public may file documents and make payments in these divisions at the drop box outside of the Clerk’s Office in each division.
  + Southern District: The Savannah, Augusta, and Brunswick Courthouses have drop boxes located in the foyers of each Courthouse for the public to submit payments and filings. Persons falling into certain specified categories (including, those who have been or have been in close contact with a person who has been to a Level 3 country within the 14 days, those who have been on a cruise within 14 days, those who have been asked to self-quarantine, or those with COVID-19 like symptoms) are denied admittance to the Courthouse without an exception from the Chief Judge. All persons entering the Courthouses will be screened for a fever of 100 degrees or higher. Video conferences or telephonic conferences are available for certain hearings.
* Hawaii
  + All civil and criminal trials scheduled to commence between March 17, 2020 and May 3, 2020 before any District or Magistrate Judge are continued. All civil hearings, including settlement conferences, scheduled between March 17, 2020 and May 3, 2020 will either be conducted telephonically or will be taken off the Court’s calendar.
* Idaho
  + All jury trials scheduled to begin on or before May 11, 2020 are continued until further Order of the Court. Any hearing deemed essential will be conducted with the least number of persons as possible in the actual Courtroom, as determined by the presiding Judge. Video and telephonic means will be utilized to the extent possible. Those persons in the Courtroom will maintain a distance from each other of six feet in accordance with social distancing and no more than ten people will be physically present in the Courtroom. This Order does not affect the Court’s consideration of bankruptcy, civil, or criminal motions that can be decided without oral argument or in-Court presentation of evidence.
* Illinois
  + Northern District: All deadlines, whether imposed by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or Court Order are extended by 49 days from March 17, 2020 with the exception of Fed. R. Civ. P. 50(b) or (d), 52(b), (d), or (e), or 60(b). The deadline extension does not apply to deadlines for any appeal for this Court or for filing a notice of appeal. The presiding Judge, on a case-by-case basis and for good cause, may extend, shorten, or revoke the deadline extensions noted in the Court’s general Order. All civil case hearings, bench trials, and settlement conferences for on or before May 1, 2020 are stricken and are to be rescheduled on or by May 4, 2020. Civil jury trials scheduled for on or before May 29, 2020 are stricken and are to be rescheduled on or by June 1, 2020. All filings may still be submitted through the Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system, or through mail.
  + Central District: All civil jury trials scheduled for on or before May 18, 2020 are continued and are to be rescheduled for a date after May 18, 2020. All civil hearings, including settlement conferences, shall be conducted by telephone or video conference. All filings may still be submitted through the Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system, or through mail.
  + Southern District: All deadlines, whether imposed by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or Court Order are extended by 30 days with the exception of Fed. R. Civ. P. 50(b) or (d), 52(b), (d), or (e), or 60(b). The deadline extension does not apply to deadlines for any appeal for this Court or for filing a notice of appeal. Only essential proceedings will occur. All filings may still be submitted through the Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system, or through mail.
* Indiana
  + Northern District: All jury trials are continued and will be rescheduled to a date after June 1, 2020 by the presiding Judge. Grand juries are continued until after May 15, 2020. To the extent criminal proceedings may be conducted via phone or videoconference, these proceedings will be so converted by the assigned Judge after consultation with counsel. All in person civil Court proceedings are converted to telephonic or videoconference proceedings, and exceptions to conduct non-jury proceedings will be at the discretion of the presiding Judge after consultation with counsel. All District Courthouses in the Northern District of Indiana are closed to the public, with the closure being open ended to meet the needs to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Those person without access to the Court’s electronic filing system must be submitted vial mail.
  + Southern District: The Court continues to conduct business, with limitations. All jury trials through at least May 1, 2020 are continued. Unless otherwise Ordered by the presiding Judge, all other criminal Court proceedings will proceed as scheduled, with proceedings being converted to telephonic or videoconference proceedings at the discretion of the presiding Judge. Unless otherwise Ordered by the presiding Judge, all other civil Court proceedings will proceed as scheduled, with proceedings being converted to telephonic or videoconference proceedings at the discretion of the presiding Judge. The Court will continue to conduct all necessary hearings and other proceedings as it deems proper. Divisional locations in Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Evansville, New Albany, Bloomington, and Noblesville are close to the public. The Clerk’s Office is available by telephone and mail. For those person without access to the Court’s electronic filing system, publicly available “drop boxes” are available at the divisional locations. Certain people can be denied access to the Courthouses at the discretion of law enforcement personnel.
* Iowa
  + Northern District: All jury trials and grand juries are postponed until May 11, 2020. Sioux City and Cedar Rapids Courthouses open but limited to 9am – 4pm. The Court authorizes the use of videoconferencing or teleconferencing for certain criminal matters. Southern District: All jury trials postponed until July 6, 2020. All grand juries in April 2020 are cancelled. Criminal proceedings should use video conference to greatest extent possible. Clerk’s office remains open, but limited to 8 am – 4pm.
* Kansas
  + The Court is open for business with limited hours of operation. All criminal cases and matters scheduled for nonemergency hearings or trial before any District or Magistrate Judge in the District are postponed pending further Order of the Court.
* Kentucky
  + Eastern District: The Court is open for business. The Lexington Courthouse is open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays), subject to certain restrictions. With some exceptions, all civil and criminal trials through May 1, 2020 are continued for a minimum period of thirty (30) days, subject to further Orders of the Court.
  + Western District: All Courts in the District remain open for business. With some exceptions, all civil and criminal trials through May 1, 2020 are continued for a minimum period of thirty (30) days, subject to further Orders of the Court.
* Louisiana
  + Eastern District: All civil and criminal bench and jury trials are continued until May 1, 2020, to be rescheduled by the presiding Judge. No other deadlines are continued. Further, all hearings, proceedings, and conferences are continued until May 1, 2020, but all other deadlines currently pending are not continued. All grand jury proceedings are continued until May 1, 2020. Sealed documents should be submitted by email to the Court at [sealeddocs@laed.usCourts.gov](mailto:sealeddocs@laed.uscourts.gov). Please use the encrypted “Send Securely” option in your email if available. Documents should be in PDF format and include an electronic signature of the attorney filing it. The Courthouse building is closed to the public.
  + Middle District: All civil evidentiary hearings and other in-Court hearings and proceedings requiring personal appearances through April 30, 2020 are postponed, to be rescheduled by and at the discretion of the presiding Judge. Prescriptive, preemptive, and statute of limitation deadlines are suspended until April 30, 2020. Filings in sealed matters, which are required to be filed conventionally (in-person) pursuant to administrative procedures shall be filed 1) by facsimile to (225) 389-3501 or 2) by sending an electronically signed pleading in PDF format via encrypted or secure email (if available) to [sealedwb@lamd.usCourts.gov](mailto:sealedwb@lamd.uscourts.gov).
  + Western District: All civil and criminal jury trials scheduled to begin on any date through May 1, 2020, are continued to be rescheduled by the presiding Judge. All other hearings, conferences and/or proceedings are subject to the discretion of the presiding Judge. Judges may continue to hold in-person hearings, sentencing proceedings and conferences, but counsel may seek relief from those matters by appropriate motions. The parties are encouraged to seek to participate in non-sentencing hearings and conferences by telephone or video. Magistrate Judges will continue to preside over criminal matters, such as initial appearances, arraignments, detention hearings and the issuance of warrants. Wherever feasible, Magistrate Judges should consider the use of video conferencing for initial appearances and other hearings as appropriate. Public access to the Western District Clerk of Court Offices in the Alexandria, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, and Shreveport Divisions is suspended.
* Maine
  + Public access to scheduled hearings will be permitted only with the prior permission of the presiding Judge. The Clerk’s Office will be open by appointment only. Staff in the Clerk’s Office will be available by telephone. The Clerk’s Office’s in-person intake window will be closed. Persons filing documents in person will be directed to leave such documents at a designated drop-off point in the Court at a designated time.
* Maryland
  + The Court remains open at this time. All civil, criminal, and bankruptcy proceedings in the District, including Court appearances, trials, hearings, settlement conferences, conference calls, naturalization and admission ceremonies, and grand jury meetings now through June 5, 2020, are postponed and will be rescheduled. All filing deadlines for all cases through June 5, 2020, are extended by eighty-four (84) days, unless otherwise Ordered by the presiding Judge in an individual case. Unless otherwise ordered by the presiding Judge, the suspension of filing deadlines does not include the conduct of discovery in civil cases. The Southern Division Courthouse in Greenbelt,, Maryland has temporarily suspended all in-Court proceedings.
* Massachusetts
  + Courthouses (all divisions) are open during regular business hours. The public counters are open 9:00 AM to 2 PM to permit limited personnel in each office to complete necessary administrative business each day. Judges may hold hearings and conferences, but are strongly encouraged to conduct Court proceedings by telephone or video conferencing where practicable. No civil trials or mediations to be conducted until at least May 29, 2020.
* Michigan
  + Eastern District: The U.S. District Courthouse in Detroit is closed to the public after a Court security officer tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. The Courthouse will remain closed to the public until further notice. All other Eastern District of Michigan Court facilities are open with reduced Court operations and visitor restrictions in place. All civil and criminal matters scheduled for in-person appearances are postponed until further Court notice. Case-by-case exceptions to postponements may be Ordered for nonjury matters.
  + Western District: The Court is open to the public on an “appointment only” basis until April 14, 2020. Each Judge will make case specific assessments regarding what can be postponed, or handled by phone, video-conference or in other ways short of in person hearings.
* Minnesota
  + Clerk’s office intake desks in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth are closed to the public but continue to accept filing and payments through the mail. Cash is no longer accepted. The Courthouses are still open, but Judges may conduct Court proceedings by telephone or video conferences. All jury trials and grand jury proceedings are postponed until April 27.
* Mississippi
  + Northern District: All proceedings, civil and criminal, scheduled or typically undertaken in person should be continued or conducted by video or telephone conference to every extent possible. The District issued a Standing Order requiring parties, attorneys, witnesses, or any other Courtroom participant to notify the Court and opposing counsel if they have been in contact with any other person in the past 14 days who may have been infected by COVID-19.
  + Southern District: All non-essential civil and criminal matters set for hearing or trial through May 1, 2020, in any Federal Courthouse within the District are continued. Initial appearances, arraignments, detention hearings, and issuance of warrants are deemed essential. For other matters, the presiding Judge has the sole discretion to determine whether they are essential and should go forward, or whether they can be conducted by video-conference or telephone.
* Missouri
  + Eastern District: All jury trials and grand juries are suspended through May 31, 2020. Courthouse remains open, but general public limited to main lobby. The Clerk of Court’s office hours reduced to 10am – 3pm.

Western District: All jury trials and grand juries are continued through May 3, 2020. Non-emergency criminal and civil hearings are also continued through May 3, 2020. Courthouse remains open, but public counters are closed to the public.

* Montana
  + All jury trials (criminal and civil) and associated final pretrial conferences through May 1, 2020, have previously been vacated, to be rescheduled by Order of the presiding Judge. This Order does not vacate any pending deadlines other than the trial dates and final pretrial conferences. Individual Judges may continue to hold non-jury proceedings such as bench trials, in-person hearings, settlement conferences, sentencing hearings, and other Court matters as they deem appropriate, on a case-by-case basis. Counsel may seek to continue such matters or request leave to appear remotely by appropriate motions. The use of telephonic or video proceeding is encouraged to the greatest extent possible.
* Nebraska
  + All trials and grand jury proceedings are postponed until May 1, 2020. All civil and criminal matters with in-person appearances are continued pending further Order of the Court. Courthouses remain open, but the public and bar are encouraged to continue Court follow public health guidelines while using Court services.
* Nevada
  + All non-case related events scheduled to be held in the District’s Courthouses are postponed pending further Order of the Court. All civil and criminal trials, including any associated deadlines, are continued until April 10, 2020 pending further Order of the Court. The Court is striving to eliminate in-person Court appearances. In the event that a hearing must go forward, the Court will attempt to conduct the hearing by video conference or telephone (with the defendant’s consent in criminal cases), and the Courtroom will be closed. Members of the public may call in to listen to a scheduled hearing on the phone line provided for each hearing. The Court will vacate or amend its Order no later than April 30, 2020.
* New Hampshire
  + Courthouse closed to the public until further notice. All Judges and Court staff are working full time on the cases. All Court employees will telework, process Court filings, issue Orders and Judgments, schedule hearings and conferences, and be available to answer telephone calls and emails from the public and the bar. All civil and criminal jury trials scheduled to begin before May 1, 2020, are continued. All civil hearings and conferences scheduled to occur after March 20, 2020, shall remain as scheduled and conducted by teleconference or videoconference.
* New Jersey
  + All civil and criminal jury selections and trials scheduled to begin before April 30, 2020 are postponed until further notice. Judges can continue to hold proceedings at their discretion and are encouraged to conduct proceedings remotely. Where a Judge finds that obtaining an actual signature is impracticable or imprudent in light of the public health situation relating to COVID-19, any document may be signed electronically. All filing and discovery deadlines in matters between March 25, 2020 through April 30, 2020 are extended forty-five (45) days, unless the presiding Judge in an individual case directs otherwise.
* New Mexico
  + Court operations will continue subject to certain limitations. Only persons with official Court business may enter the Courthouse through May 1, 2020. All civil and criminal jury trials scheduled to commence through May 1, 2020 before any Judge in any Courthouse in the District are continued subject to further Order. In any civil case in which the United States Marshals Service has been Ordered to serve process, the time for service under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m) is tolled until May 1, 2020.
* New York
  + Southern District: All civil and criminal jury trials that were scheduled to begin before April 27, 2020 are postponed until at least June 1, 2020. Counsel are urged to check the web pages of individual Judges, who have been instructed to post thereon any Orders of general applicability extending time in civil matters, adjourning conferenced, and the like. The Thurgood Marshall Courthouse is closed for all District matters, with the exception of grand jury matters. The Daniel Patrick Moynihan Courthouse will be open, but only to hear urgent criminal matters (arraignments/bail applications and reviews/pleas and sentences by special arrangement) and matters in which immediate relief is sought pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 65 (b). The Brieant Courthouse remains open. There will be one person staffing the Clerk’s Office.
  + Northern District: The Courthouses remain open, but visitors are restricted until further notice. All civil and criminal jury trials, including grand juries, scheduled to begin through April 30 are postponed until further notice. Other criminal matters such as initial appearances and arraignments before Magistrate Judges will continue to take place as usual. Motions that can be resolved without oral arguments or personal appearances are unaffected.
  + Eastern District: Access to Court buildings is restricted to “those whose presence is essential.” All civil and criminal jury trials that were scheduled to begin before April 27 have been postponed. For all criminal matters that had preliminary hearings before Magistrate Judges scheduled for March 18 through April 27, preliminary hearing deadlines are extended 60 days after the initial appearance. Video or telephone conferencing is allowed for several types of proceedings, including detention hearings, initial appearances, and arraignments. The Clerk’s Office in Brooklyn and Central Islip will only accept paper filings in the drop box in the lobby. Attorneys are strongly encouraged to file electronically, and paper filings may be delayed.
  + Western District: The Rochester and Buffalo Courthouses remain open, but visitors are restricted. All civil jury trials and grand jury selections are continued for 60 days as of March 16, 2020. The Court encouraged Judges to reduce personal appearances for all other proceedings (criminal and civil) as much as possible. Motions that can be resolved without oral arguments or personal appearances are unaffected.
* North Carolina
  + Eastern District: All Courthouses remain open for business, subject to certain limitations. All civil and criminal jury trials set to begin on or before May 1, 2020 are postponed until further notice. All other hearings are subject to the presiding Judge’s discretion. Individual Judges may continue to hold in-person hearings and proceedings, but counsel may seek relief from those matters by appropriate motions. Parties are encouraged to participate in proceedings remotely.
  + Middle District: All Courthouses remain open for official business and will continue operations to the greatest extent possible under the circumstances. All civil jury trials scheduled to begin before May 4, 2020 are postponed pending further Order of the Court or the assigned Judge.
  + Western District: Courthouses remain open for business, subject to certain limitations. Individual Judges may continue to hold in-person hearings and proceedings, but counsel may seek relief from those matters by appropriate motions. The parties may seek to participate in hearings and proceedings by telephone or video as appropriate. Judges have discretion to manage the Courtroom as the Judge believes is legally appropriate based on public health considerations.
* North Dakota
  + All jury trials and grand juries are continued until May 1, 2020. All hearings, except for criminal matters before Magistrate Judges, are suspended until May 1, 2020. Courthouses are closed to the public except for scheduled appointments.
* Northern Marina Islands
  + All civil and criminal jury selections and jury trials scheduled before May 15, 2020 are continued pending further Order of the Court. To the extent possible, all civil, criminal, and bankruptcy hearings will be conducted by telephone or videoconference as determined by the presiding Judge.
* Ohio
  + Northern District: All Courthouses in the District are closed to the public until May 1, 2020. No jury trial will be commenced before May 1, 2020. Any trial dates currently scheduled prior to May 1, 2020 are vacated. All scheduled civil matters will be conducted by telephone or videoconference unless otherwise canceled by the presiding Judge. This applies to motion hearings, case management conferences, pretrial conferences, settlement conferences, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) proceedings.
  + Southern District: Courthouses in Dayton, Cincinnati, and Columbus are closed to the public. Any civil or criminal matters scheduled for trial, whether jury or non-jury, are postponed for 60 days, including any associated deadlines. Judges may Order case-by-case exceptions to postponements.
* Oklahoma
  + Eastern District: The Court is open and is operating with certain limitations and restrictions on who may enter the Courthouse. All jury trials through June 1, 2020 are continued pending further Order.
  + Northern District: The Court remains open. All civil hearings and trials before any District or Magistrate Judge scheduled before April 30, 2020 are continued pending further Court Order. All other scheduling Order deadlines, including discovery cut-off and all motion response and reply deadlines shall remain in effect. Telephonic hearings may be scheduled at the discretion of the Judge. All Court-Ordered settlement conferences scheduled before April 30, 2020 are continued pending further Court Order.
  + Western District: The Court is currently operating under Phase II of the protocols detailed in addendum to G.O. 20-5. All jury trials are postponed until after June 1, 2020. In-person status conferences are suspended, and scheduling Orders shall be issued based on submitting joint status reports or telephonic status conferences at the discretion of the presiding Judge. Presiding Judges retain discretion to determine whether civil matters should proceed as scheduled or be continued. Any matters that can be resolved without oral argument or presentation of evidence shall proceed as usual, and the conduct of discovery in civil matters shall proceed absent contrary direction by the presiding Judge.
* Oregon
  + All civil and criminal jury selections and jury trials scheduled to begin before June 1, 2020 are continued pending further Order of the Court. Unless otherwise Ordered by the presiding Judge, all other civil and criminal matters scheduled for an in-Court appearance before June 1, 2020, including any associated deadlines, are continued unless all parties and the presiding Judge agree to resolve the matters without oral argument of via telephone or video conferencing.
* Pennsylvania
  + Eastern District: Court is open with limited essential services. All civil and criminal jury trials, as well as grand jury proceedings, arbitration hearings, attorney admission ceremonies, naturalization ceremonies, and Central Violations Bureau hearings, have been continued until April 13, 2020, unless extended by further Court Order.
  + Middle District: Court remains open with limited essential services. All civil and criminal jury trials, as well as grand jury proceedings, arbitration hearings, attorney admission ceremonies, naturalization ceremonies, and Central Violations Bureau hearings, have been continued until May 31, 2020, unless extended by further Court Order.
  + Western District: Court remains open and is conducting necessary judicial business (using technology as appropriate) and is accepting filings and responding to inquiries. Only essential staff are in the Courthouse during business hours. The Harrisburg Courthouse has been closed until further notice as a result of a positive COVID-19 test of a resident law enforcement agent stationed in the building. All civil and criminal jury selections and jury trials scheduled to begin before April 27, 2020, are continued pending further Order of the Court. Where a Judge finds that obtaining an actual signature is impracticable or imprudent in light of the public health situation relating to COVID-19, any document may be signed electronically. Where a defendant's signature is required, either defense counsel or the presiding Judge may sign on the defendant’s behalf if the defendant, after an opportunity to consult with counsel, consents.
* Puerto Rico
  + All jury trials scheduled from March 16, 2020 through May 29, 2020 are continued pending further Court Order. All civil and criminal proceedings requiring a hearing are continued until May 4, 2020. After April 15, 2020, the Court will operate through a virtual Courtroom system. Criminal hearings requiring the presence of defendants will be held using the video tele-conferencing system, but counsel of record must be present in Court. All foreclosure proceedings are stayed until May 30, 2020. Judges may Order counsel to provide motion updates on case status and may continue to issue all appropriate case management Orders in their cases. The Clerk’s Office will remain open with essential personnel.
* Rhode Island
  + Courthouse is closed, but Court remains “fully functioning” and “operational” while Judges and clerks work remotely until further notice. The presiding Judge’s case manager instructed to cancel all in-person civil matters, and instead, where possible, arrange hearings to be conducted telephonically. The Government’s response to any emergency motion filed citing the COVID-19 pandemic as grounds for the relief sought shall be due on or before five (5) days from the service of such motion.
* South Carolina
  + Public intake areas of all divisions of the Clerk’s Offices in the District are closed to the public. All civil and criminal jury selections, jury trials, and roster meetings scheduled to commence through May 8, 2020 are continued pending further Order of the Court. In all civil cases, all deadlines, whether set by the Court, the Rules of Civil Procedure, or Local Rules, are extended 21 days from the current deadline set. Statutes of limitation are not tolled. All other civil and criminal matters scheduled for in-Court appearance through May 8, 2020 are continued, unless all parties and the Presiding Judge agree to resolve the matters without Court appearance via telephone or video conferencing where practical.
* South Dakota
  + All jury trials continued until July 6, 2020. Grand jury proceedings involving more than ten (10) people situated less than six (6 )feet away from each other are also continued until July 6, 2020. Non-jury proceedings are to proceed as scheduled in the discretion of presiding Judge. Court business to proceed otherwise as normal consistent with public health guidelines.
* Tennessee
  + Eastern District: Court remains open for business subject to certain limitations. All civil and criminal jury trials scheduled before April 24, 2020 are postponed, unless otherwise Ordered by the presiding Judge. All non-jury civil trials Case-specific deadlines contained in the Scheduling Order are not impacted. Cases not scheduled for a trial will proceed as scheduled, but oral proceedings will be conducted by telephone or video conferencing to the extent practicable.
  + Middle District: The Court remains open for business subject to certain limitations. All civil and criminal jury selections and trials are continued through April 30, 2020, pending further Order by the presiding Judge. Individual Judges may continue to hold hearings, conferences, and bench trials in the exercise of their discretion, subject to intervening Orders. Court proceedings may be conducted by telephone or video conference where practicable and consistent with law. All deadlines previously established in both civil and criminal cases remain in full force and effect, absent further Order by the presiding Judge in the matter.
  + Western District: The federal Courthouse in Jackson, Tennessee is closed to the public until further notice. The Memphis Court remains open for business subject to certain limitations. All civil judicial proceedings and jury trials currently scheduled are continued until after April 17, 2020, and will be rescheduled. Prior to April 17, 2020, the Court will reevaluate then-existing circumstances and updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and federal, state, and local public health authorities, to determine whether circumstances warrant an extension of the April 17, 2020, date or whether judicial proceedings, including jury trials and grand jury proceedings, can resume.
* Texas
  + Eastern District: Civil and criminal bench and jury trials scheduled to begin any date through May 1, 2020, are continued to be rescheduled by the presiding Judge. Continuances do not continue any pending deadlines other than trial dates. All grand jury proceedings through May 1, 2020 are continued, and all deadlines suspended, including the statute of limitations are suspended through May 1, 2020. All Courthouses have restricted entry requirements, which require a specific reason to be present in the Courthouse.
  + Northern District: Civil and criminal bench and jury trials scheduled to begin any date through May 1, 2020, are continued to be rescheduled by the presiding Judge. Continuances do not continue any pending deadlines other than trial dates. All grand jury proceedings through May 1, 2020 are continued, and all deadlines suspended, including the statute of limitations are suspended through May 1, 2020. All Courthouses have restricted entry requirements, which require a specific reason to be present in the Courthouse.
  + Southern District: Houston/Galveston Division civil and criminal jury trials are continued through May 1, 2020. Other deadlines and settings remain in place pending further Order by each Judge. Courthouses in Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Victoria, Houston, Galveston, Laredo, and McAllen are closed until further notice. County shelter-in-place Orders are in effect throughout the Southern District of Texas. The Courts are exempt. The Court has undertaken efforts to minimize the need to require employees, lawyers, or litigants from deviating from the shelter-in-place Orders. Those steps will likely include deferring any non-essential in-Court appearances or having them occur by telephone conference, Skype, or similar technology. The Clerks’ Office will have a reduced staff, enough to keep up with processing the mail and with intake needs. Docketing and most other tasks will be handled remotely. All Courthouses have restricted entry requirements, which require a specific reason to be present in the Courthouse.
  + Western District: All settings in civil or criminal matters scheduled before May 1, 2020 are cancelled with the exception of pleas, sentencings, criminal matters before Magistrate Judges, which shall continue utilizing procedures consistent with the Court’s Order and video technology. Civil and criminal bench and jury trials scheduled to begin any date through May 1, 2020, are continued to be rescheduled by the presiding Judge. Continuances do not continue any pending deadlines other than trial dates. All grand jury proceedings through May 1, 2020 are continued. All Courthouses have restricted entry requirements, which require a specific reason to be present in the Courthouse.
* Utah
  + The Court remains open for mission-critical functions of the judiciary, but the public and members of the bar are encouraged to come to the Courthouse only as necessary for official Court-related activities, including case filings that cannot be submitted electronically, attendance for in-person criminal hearings described above, and the like. All civil and criminal jury trials scheduled through May 1, 2020 are continued pending further Order of the Court. All settlement conferences scheduled through May 1, 2020 are vacated. Absent exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, all hearings in emergency matters shall be conducted by means that do not require in-person attendance.
* Vermont
  + The Burlington Courthouse will remain open to support hearings, but will operate with a limited staff and resources. The Clerk’s Offices are closed to the public. All civil and criminal matters scheduled for in-person Court appearances are postponed until further notice- except for initial appearances or arraignments for criminal defendants. The Court’s Order does not affect motions that can be resolved remotely or without oral argument. All grand jury proceedings are postponed until April 23.
* Virgin Islands
  + The District Court for the Virgin Islands remains open for business, but is closed to the public. All civil and criminal jury and bench trials through April 16, 2020 are continued, pending further Order of the Court. The Court will conduct conferences and hearings telephonically when it is practicable and efficient to do so.
* Virginia
  + Eastern District: All civil and criminal in-person proceedings scheduled to occur through May 1, 2020 are postponed and will be rescheduled for a later date, unless the presiding Judge in the individual case issues an Order directing that a particular critical or emergency proceeding be held. All filing deadlines set to occur on or before April 14, 2020 are extended by fourteen (14) days, unless the presiding Judge directs that filings be submitted earlier.
  + Western District: All Courthouses remain open. All in-person criminal, civil, and bankruptcy proceedings on or before May 1, 2020 are continued and will be rescheduled at a later date, unless a presiding Judge issues an Order directing that a particular proceeding be held on or before May 1, 2020. All civil and criminal jury trials on or before May 1, 2020 are continued and will be rescheduled. Judges may continue to conduct proceedings by telephone or video conferencing where practicable and authorized by law.
* Washington
  + Eastern District: All hearings in civil and criminal cases scheduled for in-Court appearances before any District Judge in the District through May 15, 2020, are vacated and all associated case management deadlines related to those affected civil and criminal cases are suspended (pending further Orders from the presiding Judge in each of those cases). Hearings in civil and criminal matters set for telephonic appearance by all parties or hearings set without oral argument remain unaffected.
  + Western District: All civil and criminal hearings and trial dates in these Courthouses scheduled to occur before June 1, 2020, are continued pending further Order of the Court. The Court may proceed with video/telephonic conferences as appropriate and at the discretion of individual Judges. Individual Judges may continue to conduct emergency matters in the Seattle and Tacoma Courthouses if necessary after considering the public health situation.
* Washington, D.C.
  + Court remains open but with limited operations. All civil and criminal petit jury selections and jury trials through June 11, 2020 are postponed pending further Order of Court. All other civil or criminal proceedings, including Court appearances, non-jury trials, hearings, and settlement conferences through June 1, 2020 are postponed and will be scheduled for a later date unless the presiding Judge in an individual case issues an Order directing that a particular proceeding will be held by telephone or videoconference before June 1, 2020.
* West Virginia
  + Northern District: Court remains open. The Court suspends the requirement of paper copies of formal briefs and appendices pending further notice. As the Court utilizes electronic filing, submission of paper Courtesy copies to chambers is highly discouraged. All deadlines and scheduled hearings will remain in place unless the presiding Judge in an individual case issues an Order directing otherwise. Chambers will contact counsel to reschedule proceedings when appropriate. Statutes of limitation are not tolled.
  + Southern District: Court remains open for business, but is closed to the public. All civil and criminal petit jury selections and trials through April 24, 2020 before any District or Magistrate Judge are continued until further Order of the Court. All other in-person civil and criminal proceedings, including Court appearances, trials, hearings, settlement conferences through April 24, 2020, are postponed and will be rescheduled at a later date, unless the presiding Judge in an individual case issues an Order after the date of this Order directing that a particular proceeding will be held on or before April 24, 2020.
* Wisconsin
  + Eastern District: All jury trials scheduled to begin before May 1, 2020 are continued and will be rescheduled to a date after May 1, 2020. Judges will continue to hold hearings (either in person or telephonically) and issue Orders. All civil hearings, including settlement conferences, shall be conducted by telephone or videoconferencing. All filings may still be submitted through the Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system.
  + Western District: The District Courthouse remains open to the public, with restrictions aimed at maintaining public health. All in-person hearings up to May 18, 2020 are rescheduled, subject to a case-by-case basis. All jury trials have been suspended through May 18, 2020.
* Wyoming
  + The Court remains open. All civil trials scheduled before June 1, 2020 are vacated, along with any final pretrial conference and associated deadlines. All other civil deadlines, unassociated with the trial date and final pretrial conference, shall remain in place subject to modification by the Court. At this time, civil trials set to be scheduled after June 1, 2020 will continue as currently scheduled. All in-person hearings scheduled in civil cases through May 31, 2020 will be held by reliable electronic means that do not require personal appearance in the Courthouse.
* Federal Claims
  + National Courts Building complex limits public access to the lobby. No public access to Clerk’s office, filings must be submitted by U.S.P.S. or deposit in Court’s night box. As of March 16, 2020 no alteration or extension in any deadlines in any cases.
* International Trade
  + Courthouse access is restricted until further notice, all filings made in person should be brought to the Court Security Officers. All filing deadlines remain in effect.
* Veterans Claims
  + All oral arguments scheduled through April 20, 2020 are postponed. The Court will hear arguments beginning April 21, 2020 via teleconference. Filing deadlines will not automatically be extended but the Court will sympathetically consider requests for extensions or stays.

**2. If not, are there any exceptions to the arrest of ships and/or are other injunctive or enforcement procedures available?**

The Federal Courts are all functioning at some level. The procedure for filing an action seeking to arrest or attach a vessel remains the same. To the extent the arrest or attachment is an emergency matter, most of the Federal Courts outline a procedure in their local rules to proceed on an emergency basis.

**3. Can Judicial Sale of Ships still take place?**

Yes, judicial sales of vessel can still occur. No Court appears to have issued any order forbidding the sale of a vessel pursuant to a Court Order authorizing the sale. However, depending upon the location of the Court Ordered judicial sale, those attending may have to abide by guidelines and orders (i.e. social distancing guidelines, gathering restrictions, use of personal protective equipment, etc.) issued by any applicable federal, state, or local officials.

**4. Do you know how long the Courts in your jurisdiction will be closed for?**

The Federal Courts are all functioning at some level. However, certain Courts have issued Orders, *inter alia*, forbidding the public, limiting attendance to certain hours, closing certain Courthouse locations, etc. We summarize as follows the permitted access to each Court in light of the COVID-19 pandemic:

**Summary of Access to the Supreme Court of the United States**

The Court remains open for official business, but most Court personnel are teleworking. The Court remains closed to the public until further notice.

**Summary of Access to the Courts of Appeals**

* First Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The sitting of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit scheduled for April 6 through April 9, 2020 is cancelled. The First Circuit will not accept in-person filings at its intake window. Paper filing must be done using the drop-box located on the first floor by the main entrance.
* Second Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Court is not open to the public. Those who do not have business with the Court will not be admitted until further notice.
* Third Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Court remains open and operational at this time.
* Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Court remains open at this time. All oral argument scheduled during the Court’s March 17-20, April 7, 2020, and May 5-8, 2020 sessions have been suspended. Cases will be continued for argument at a later session, scheduled for argument by video-conference or teleconference, or submitted on the briefs, at the discretion of the panels in each case.
* Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Court has canceled in person oral arguments scheduled for April 27-30, 2020.  When the Court determines how to proceed in these cases, the Clerk’s Office will advise counsel. All current deadlines for attorney filers remain in effect, except for those regarding production of paper copies. Extensions with justification may be requested from the Clerk's Office following normal procedures and rules.
* Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Court is open for business. In-person oral arguments have been cancelled for the weeks of April 27 and May 4, 2020. Counsel have been informed and the Court will reschedule some arguments to be heard remotely. All remote arguments will be recorded and posted to the Court’s website on the same day the arguments are held.
* Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals
  + All cases scheduled for oral argument from March 30, 2020 through the end of April 2020, will be argued telephonically by counsel.  The Courtroom will be closed to the public.
* Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + Clerk’s Office is closed to the public. Individuals coming to Courthouse to file a document will be directed where to deposit by Security Officers. The Eagleton Court House is open to general public, but limited to the lobby.
* Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + Until further notice, all Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Courthouses are closed to the public during non-Court weeks. Attorneys and parties who have access to CM/ECF are strongly encouraged to use it for everything, including new petitions for review and original proceedings. Further updates will be posted on the Court’s website as the situation warrants.
* Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals
  + The Byron White United States Courthouse is closed to the public. Until further notice, access to the Courthouse is restricted to Judges, Court staff, Court security officers, and service providers with official business with the Court (e.g., the United States Postal Service, and contractors working on pending projects) subject to the certain restrictions. All cases set for argument in April and May.
* Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals
  + Access to the Elbert P. Tuttle Courthouse (Tuttle Courthouse) and John C. Godbold Federal Building (Godbold Building) is restricted to Judges, Court staff, members of the media, and visitors with official business with the Court. Individuals who have been diagnosed with or who have had known contact with a person with the COVID-19 virus or who have been asked to self-quarantine or who are experiencing flu-like symptoms should not enter the Courthouse to conduct business.
* Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia
  + Effective March 13, access to the Courthouse is restricted to visitors with official business with the Courts until further Order.
* Federal Circuit
  + As of March 16, National Courts Building Complex limited public access to lobby only until further notice of the Court. No public access to the clerk’s office.

**Summary of Access to the Federal District Courts**

* Alabama[[4]](#footnote-4)
  + Middle District: Access to the Montgomery, Dothan and Opelika Courthouses is restricted to Judges, Court staff, members of the media, and visitors with official business with the Court. Persons who have traveled to certain countries within 14 days, have been in close contact with someone who has, are sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 are not permitted entry to the Court. No timeline provided for the restrictions.
  + Northern District: Persons who have traveled to certain countries within 14 days, have been in close contact with someone who has, are sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 are not permitted entry to the Court. The Hugo L. Black and Robert S. Vance Courthouses in Birmingham, as well as the US Courthouses in Tuscaloosa, Huntsville, and Anniston will remain open for business. No timeline provided for the restrictions.
  + Southern District: Persons who have traveled to certain countries within 14 days, have been in close contact with someone who has, are sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 will have their access to the Courthouse delayed. This will not affect your rights to due process, and alternate measures will be made. No timeline provided for the restrictions.
* Alaska
  + All non-case related activities scheduled are canceled until further notice. The James M. Fitzgerald U.S. Courthouse in Anchorage, the U.S. Courthouse in Fairbanks, and the U.S. Courthouse in Juneau, shall be closed to the public except to persons with a scheduled appointment or entering to submit a physical filing to the drop box.
* Arizona
  + As of March 23, 2020 and through April 10, 2020 the Flagstaff Courthouse will be closed to the public except for Court proceedings, such as initial appearances, deemed necessary by the Court subject to further Orders of the Court.
* Arkansas
  + Eastern District: Jury trials and grand juries postponed until April 30, 2020. Courthouses remain open.
  + Western District: All trials and grand juries postponed until May 1. Courthouses remain open, but hours limited to 9:00 am – 3:30 pm.
* California
  + Northern District: All essential Court proceedings have been consolidated and relocated to the San Francisco Courthouse. All other Courthouses of the Northern District of California are entirely closed to the general public until May 1, 2020. This period may be extended by further Order.
  + Eastern District: All Courthouses of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California shall be closed to the public. Only persons having official Court business may enter the Courthouse.
  + Central District: All of the Courthouses of the Central District of California will be closed to the public except for hearings on criminal duty matters until further notice.
  + Southern District: No information regarding closure.
* Colorado
  + Court clerk’s office intake counter is closed to public entry beginning Monday, March 30, 2020 until further notice.
* Connecticut
  + The Clerk’s Office is not open to the general public. Manual filing may be done in drop box in Courthouse lobby. The public computer terminal is not accessible.
* Delaware
  + The District of Delaware is open.
* Florida
  + Northern District: All Court locations within the Northern District of Florida have been closed to the public, except for those individuals who are required to attend in-person hearings, trials, or other necessary matters before the Court. No timeline provided for the restrictions.
  + Middle District: The public intake areas in the Clerk’s Offices are closed until further notice. Persons who have traveled to certain countries within 14 days, have been in close contact with someone who has, have been Ordered to quarantine, are sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 are not permitted entry to the Court. No timeline provided for the restrictions.
  + Southern District: The United States Courthouses in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Fort Pierce, and Key West, including Bankruptcy Court and Probation, will remain open for business. Persons who have traveled to certain countries within 14 days, have been in close contact with someone who has, have been Ordered to quarantine, are sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 are not permitted entry to the Court.
* Guam
  + The Courthouse has been closed to the general public through April 13, 2020.
* Georgia
  + Northern District: The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia has temporarily closed the public counters in the Rome and Gainesville divisions until further notice. Persons who have been in any foreign country or participated in international travel within the last 14 days, or reside with someone who has; persons who have been asked to self-quarantine; and persons who have been diagnosed with, or have had contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 must not enter the Atlanta, Gainesville, Newnan, or Rome Courthouses for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia:
  + Middle District: Beginning on Monday, April 6, 2020, the Clerk’s Offices of the Middle District of Georgia will not be available for in-person filings. Persons who have traveled to certain countries within 14 days, have been on a cruise in the last 14 days, have been asked to self-quarantine, or diagnosed with COVID-19 are not permitted entry to the Court.
  + Southern District: Persons who have been in any foreign country or participated in international travel within the last 14 days, or reside with someone who has; persons who have been asked to self-quarantine; and persons who have been diagnosed with, or have had contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 shall be denied admittance into any division Courthouse in the Southern District of Georgia without obtaining an exception from the Chief Judge. Also, all persons entering the Courthouses will be screened for a fever of 100.0 or higher.
* Hawaii
  + The United States District Court for the District of Hawaii is closed to the public until May 3, 2020.
* Idaho
  + The Boise, Coeur d’Alene and Pocatello Courthouses are closed except for essential hearings until April 15, 2020 or further Order of the Court.
* Illinois
  + Northern District: The District Courts, Chicago and Rockford Divisions, will be closed to the public through May 1, 2020.
  + Central District: The District Courthouses located in Springfield, Urbana, and Davenport will all be closed to the public through May 18, 2020.
  + Southern District: The District Courthouses located in East St. Louis and Benton will be closed to the public, subject to exceptions allowing the Court to meet its constitutional duties until May 3, 2020.
* Indiana
  + Northern District: All District Courthouses in the Northern District of Indiana are closed to the public.
  + Southern District: All District Courthouses in the Southern District of Indiana are closed to the public through May 1, 2020.
* Iowa
  + Northern District Courthouses are still open, but hours are limited to 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.
  + Southern District Courthouses are still open, but Clerk’s hours limited to 8:00 am – 4pm.
* Kansas
  + The Clerk’s Office in the three Courthouse locations are operating with reduced staff during the following hours of operation. Kansas City – 9:00am – 4:30 pm; Topeka – 9am – 4:30 pm, closed from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm for lunch; Wichita – 9:00 am – 4:30 pm.
* Kentucky
  + Eastern District: The Court is open for business. The Lexington Courthouse is open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays), subject to certain restrictions.
  + Western District: Courthouses in the District remain open for business.
* Louisiana
  + Eastern District: Courthouses are closed to the public.
  + Middle District: Persons who have traveled to China, Italy, Iran, or South Korea within the last 14 days; reside or have had close contact with someone who has traveled in one of the aforementioned areas within the last 14 days; have been asked to self-quarantine by any hospital or health agency; or have been diagnosed with, or have had contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 will be restricted from entry.
  + Western District: All Courthouses will remain open, subject to limitations.
* Maine
  + Courthouse remains open. Court has implemented teleworking program for employees.
* Maryland
  + The Court remains open at this time. The Southern Division Courthouse in Greenbelt, Maryland has temporarily suspended all in-Court proceedings.
* Massachusetts
  + Courthouse is open, but no mediations or trials until at least May 29, 2020 and no in person hearings/conferences until further notice.
* Michigan
  + Eastern District: The U.S. District Courthouse in Detroit is closed to the public after a Court security officer tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. The Courthouse will remain closed to the public until further notice. All other Eastern District of Michigan Court facilities are open with reduced Court operations and visitor restrictions in place. All civil and criminal matters scheduled for in-person appearances are postponed until further Court notice.
  + Western District: The Court is open to the public on an “appointment only” basis until April 14, 2020. Each Judge will make case specific assessments regarding what can be postponed, or handled by phone, video-conference or in other ways short of in person hearings.
* Minnesota
  + Courthouse is open but no trials until at least April 27, Clerk’s intake desk is closed, individual Judges may switch proceedings to video or telephone conference.
* Mississippi
  + Northern District: Public access to the Courthouses limited to access that it is absolutely necessary.
  + Southern District: Courthouse open subject to limitation.
* Missouri
  + Eastern District: Courthouses open to public, but limited to lobby.
  + Western District: Courthouses open, but public counters are closed to the public.
* Montana
  + Effective March 30, 2020 and through May 1, 2020, the federal Courthouses in the District of Montana are closed to the public subject to exceptions allowing the Court to meet its constitutional duties and handle emergencies related to public safety, public health and welfare, and individual liberty.
* Nebraska
  + Courthouses remains open.
* Nevada
  + The Clerk’s Office will be closed to the public beginning March 20, 2020. This closure does not affect any filings or related deadlines.
* New Hampshire
  + Courthouse is closed, but Judges/clerks are operating remotely until further notice.
* New Jersey
  + Newark Courthouse is closed from March 26, 2020 through April 6, 2020. Clerk’s Office will only accept in person filings in drop-box.
* New Mexico
  + Court operations will continue subject to certain limitations. Only persons with official Court business may enter the Courthouse through May 1, 2020.
* New York
  + Southern District: The Thurgood Marshall Courthouse is closed for all District activities, except grand jury matters until at least May 4. The Daniel Patrick Moynihan Courthouse is open only for certain urgent criminal matters and matters in which immediate relief is sought pursuant to rule 65(b) FRCP- however access is restricted to certain, limited groups.
  + Northern District: The Courthouses remain open, but visitors are restricted until further notice.
  + Eastern District: Access to Court buildings is restricted to “those whose presence is essential.”
  + Western District: The Rochester and Buffalo Courthouses remain open, but visitors are restricted.
* North Carolina
  + Eastern District: All Courthouses remain open for business, subject to certain limitations.
  + Middle District: All Courthouses remain open for official business and will continue operations to the greatest extent possible under the circumstances.
  + Western District: Courthouses remain open for business, subject to certain limitations. Individual Judges may continue to hold in-person hearings and proceedings, but counsel may seek relief from those matters by appropriate motions. Judges have discretion to manage the Courtroom as the Judge believes is legally appropriate based on public health considerations.
* North Dakota
  + Courthouses are closed to the public until further notice.
* Northern Marina Islands
  + Physical access to the District Court, including the Clerk’s Office and the Office of Pretrial and Probation, will be temporarily closed to the public from March 23, 2020 through May 15, 2020.
* Ohio
  + Northern District: All Courthouses in the District are closed to the public until May 1.
  + Southern District: Courthouses in Dayton, Cincinnati, and Columbus are closed to the public.
* Oklahoma
  + Eastern District: The Court is open and is operating with certain limitations and restrictions on who may enter the Courthouse.
  + Northern District: The Court remains open, and will allow visitors subject to limitation.
  + Western District: The Court is open to the public.
* Oregon
  + The Portland, Eugene, Medford and Pendleton Courthouses shall remain open as usual, albeit with limited staff, unless otherwise Ordered by the Court. The District Clerk’s Office will be closed to the public in all Court locations.
* Pennsylvania
  + Eastern District: Court is open with limited essential services.
  + Middle District: Court remains open with limited essential services.
  + Western District: Court remains open and is conducting necessary judicial business (using technology as appropriate) and is accepting filings and responding to inquiries. Only essential staff are in the Courthouse during business hours. The Harrisburg Courthouse has been closed until further notice.
* Puerto Rico
  + The Clemente Ruiz Nazario and Jose V. Toledo Courthouse remain open business, subject to certain limitations. Only those conducting business related matters are allowed to enter the Courthouses.
* Rhode Island
  + Courthouse is closed, but Judges/clerks are operating remotely until further notice.
* South Carolina
  + Public intake areas of all divisions of the Clerk’s Offices in the District of South Carolina are closed to the public.
* South Dakota
  + Courthouses remain open, and will comply with public health guidelines.
* Tennessee
  + Eastern District: Court remains open for business subject to certain limitations.
  + Middle District: The Court remains open for business subject to certain limitations.
  + Western District: The federal Courthouse in Jackson, Tennessee is closed to the public until further notice. The Memphis Court remains open for business subject to certain limitations.
* Texas
  + Eastern District: All Courthouses have restricted entry requirements, which require a specific reason to be present in the Courthouse.
  + Northern District: All Courthouses have restricted entry requirements, which require a specific reason to be present in the Courthouse.
  + Southern District: Courthouses in Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Victoria, Houston, Galveston, Laredo, and McAllen are closed until further notice.
  + Western District: All Courthouses have restricted entry requirements, which require a specific reason to be present in the Courthouse.
* Utah
  + The Court remains open for mission-critical functions of the judiciary. All civil and criminal jury trials scheduled through May 1, 2020 are continued pending further Order of the Court.
* Vermont
  + Until further notice the Burlington Courthouse will remain open to support hearings but will operate with a limited staff and resources. The clerk’s offices are closed to the public.
* Virginia
  + Eastern District: Courthouse in Newport News is closed to the public and employees. Clerk’s Offices are closed to the public until further notice.
  + Western District: All Courthouses remain open, subject to certain limitations.
* Washington
  + Eastern District: Effective, Friday, March 20, 2020, the Court floors of the Spokane and Richland Courthouses, and the Yakima Courthouse in its entirety will be closed to the public pending further Order of the Court. Physical access to urgent in-person proceedings scheduled at this time will be limited to parties, counsel, witnesses and victims. The Clerk’s Office in each of the three Court locations are also closed to the public.
  + Western District: Effective March 17, 2020, the Seattle and Tacoma Courthouses will remain closed to the public for thirty days, with limited exceptions. The Court will continue, vacate, or amend its General Order no later than April 15, 2020.
* Washington DC
  + Court remains open, but with limited operations.
* West Virginia
  + Northern District: Court remains open.
  + Southern District: Court remains open for business, but is closed to the public.
* Wisconsin
  + Eastern District: The District Court will be closed to the public through May 1, 2020.
  + Western District: The District Courthouse remains open to the public, with restrictions aimed at maintaining public health.
* Wyoming
  + The Courthouse remains open, subject to certain limitations.
* International Trade
  + Courthouse access is restricted until further notice, all filings made in person should be brought to the Court Security Officers.
* Veterans Claims
  + The Court remains open and the Court has installed sanitation stations and other modifications to ensure public health.

**5. Is the flag registry in your jurisdiction (if applicable) operating as per normal in terms of the registration of ships and registration of mortgages and deletion of same?**

The United States Coast Guard National Vessel Documentation Center (“NVDC”) is monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and is prepared to adjust its operations as required.

With one (1) limited exception, the NVDC is operating normally with regard to its operations, including vessel documentation/registration, mortgage filings, and satisfaction/deletion of mortgage filings. The limited exception is that, in response to recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, the NVDC suspended walk-in customer service at the NVDC in Falling Waters, West Virginia until further notice. However, the NVDC remains fully open to accept all filings (including, vessel documentation/registration, mortgage filings, and satisfaction/deletion of mortgage filings) via email (.pdf filing), fax, and the United States Postal Service.

The NVDC reports that, in the event of facility closures and/or related operational shutdowns, the NVDC will enact measures to minimize negative impacts and to ensure that filings are uninterrupted and processed in a timely manner.

**6. Has your flag administration issued any special exemptions for the period of the Pandemic?**

No, the NVDC has not issued any special exemptions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Please also note that any reader should consult the individual Court and/or website with particular inquiries as to the current functioning status of that Court because the fluidity of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in individual Court’s regularly modifying and amending orders regarding their function. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. While the “saving to suitors” clause to the United States Constitution provides that State Courts may have jurisdiction over certain admiralty and maritime matters, *in rem* claims against vessels (including arrest, attachments, and possessory and petitory actions) must be brought in Federal Court. As a result, the below summary only addresses the functioning capacity of the various courts in the Federal Court system in the United States. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Regarding this inquiry, we address the status of all Federal District Courts in alphabetical order. If there is more than one (1) Federal District Court in a State, the individual District Courts in that State are addressed separately under the State’s heading. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Regarding this inquiry, we address the status of all Federal District Courts in alphabetical order. If there is more than one (1) Federal District Court in a State, the individual District Courts in that State are addressed separately under the State’s heading. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)