



## Supreme Court State of Tennessee

CHIEF JUSTICE  
JEFFREY S. BIVINS

JUSTICES  
CORNELIA A. CLARK  
SHARON G. LEE  
HOLLY KIRBY  
ROGER A. PAGE

401 SEVENTH AVENUE NORTH  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE  
37219

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Judge Suzanne Lockert-Mash, presiding judge 23rd judicial district

DATE: May 1, 2020

RE: 23<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District Re-Opening Plan

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On April 29, 2020, the Tennessee Supreme Court received the 23rd Judicial District Re-Opening Plan. Please revise the plan and address the following issues:

- (1) Please provide more detail on admission to the various court buildings and what health screening will be done.
- (2) This plan mentions that each judge submitted a plan for his or her court. It probably would be helpful to include those plans along with a comprehensive approach at the front of the plan.
- (3) The plan touches on most of the appropriate areas. However, more detail is needed.
- (4) Please confirm that this plan also covers the municipal courts located within the district.

Review of other plans previously approved and posted on the web page should be particularly helpful.

**TO: Rachel Harmon, General Counsel, Tennessee Supreme Court**

**From: Judge Suzanne Lockert-Mash, Presiding Circuit Court Judge, Twenty-Third Judicial District**

**Date: 4/29/2020**

**RE: Twenty-Third Judicial District Comprehensive Written Plan**

As requested by the Tennessee Supreme Court, all Judges in our district submitted their plans to begin the gradual re-introduction of in-person proceedings. For the most part, the plans were very similar as to how the Judges planned to re-introduce in-person proceedings. From those plans, I formulated the following comprehensive plan for the Twenty-Third Judicial District.

1. The use of available technology, such as Zoom and Skype, to conduct hearings will continue to be utilized in order to continue minimum personal contact.
2. When conducting in-person hearings, the court will stagger hearing times so that a minimum amount of people will be present in the courthouse. No more than ten should be allowed. Only attorneys and parties will be allowed in the courtroom. Witnesses will either wait in their vehicle or be placed in a designated area outside the courtroom. These areas will be sanitized after each case has ended. Individuals waiting in their vehicles will either be given a time to come to the entry point or will be called when they are needed in the courtroom.
3. Court personnel and bailiffs will designate courthouse entry and exit points. These designated points will be monitored by officers. Any court that has the resources to provide masks and hand sanitizers will do so. Designated seating will be provided that will comply with the social distancing standard. Signs will be used to direct people to these seating areas as well as to the entry and exit points. Judges will coordinate with their individual bailiffs and court personnel as to the best way to implement social distance guidelines in their individual courtrooms.
4. The Public Defender's Office purchased audio equipment which will allow them to communicate with their clients while maintaining social distancing. They will be allowed to use this equipment during in-person hearings. They will be responsible for sanitizing each headset after each hearing.
5. Jail dockets will continue to be held via Zoom or Skype. If an in-person hearing is needed for an inmate then that inmate will be individually transported to the court. There will be no group transportation of inmates.
6. We will conduct our Grand Juries in the courtroom so that they may be seated six feet apart. Witnesses, when they testify, will also be six feet from the grand jurors. Prior to testifying, witnesses will either be in a witness room or their vehicle. Each Grand Jury Foreperson will be advised of the social distancing guidelines.
7. Any person who is not a party or a witness will not be allowed in the courtroom.