

**The Mecklenburg County Clerk's Office is closed to the public through April 26, 2020.**

Many transactions can be handled online.

Please call us at 434-738-6191 ext. 4220, if you have any questions.

Please contact 434-738-6191 ext. 4210 or 4215 for questions regarding civil or criminal matters.

In compliance with the Orders Declaring a Judicial Emergency entered by Donald W. Lemons, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Declaration of Local Emergency by the County of Mecklenburg, we are requiring that all attorneys use e-filing for all land records through CSC or Simplifile and e-filing of civil cases through VJEFS. You may also send items by mail or leave them in the drop box at the security station. Due to the ever evolving Covid-19 situation, we are forced to cut off recordings and filings at 12PM on Fridays beginning April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please contact us at 434-738-6191 ext. 6343 or 434-738-6343, if needed, from 12PM to 5PM on Fridays. You may also contact Michelle Gordon at [mgordon@vacourts.gov](mailto:mgordon@vacourts.gov) for issues related to the Clerk's Office and contact Paula Colgate, Judicial Assistant, at [pcolgate@vacourts.gov](mailto:pcolgate@vacourts.gov), if you have any time sensitive cases or hearings that need to be set. Circuit Court will continue to have advisements and bond hearings in Courtroom B with the defendants appearing by video teleconference.

CSC is currently not charging a set up fee and is charging \$5.00 per document.

Simplifile has 2 options available:

*Option 1:* \$5 per document and \$245 per year

*Option 2:* \$10 per document and \$50 per year

VJEFS, for filing civil cases, is available at [www.courts.state.va.us](http://www.courts.state.va.us) under Online Services.

You can use Secure Remote Access in lieu of coming to the office in person to do your search. Unverified documents, which are the documents that have been recorded that day or not yet indexed, are also now available through SRA. All wills, plats, and land records from 1765 to the present time are available by SRA.

For new subscribers, SRA will be provided at no charge to all local attorneys, surveyors, title examiners, and realtors for 2 months for anyone who applies between now and April 15th. Anyone that currently subscribes to this service will be credited for 2 free months. The application and agreement must be completed before access will be granted. The free 2 month subscription is limited to 1 person per office.

To apply, please contact Melissa Jarman at 434-738-6191 ext. 4216 or email her at [mjarman@vacourts.gov](mailto:mjarman@vacourts.gov).

We apologize for the inconvenience.

# Supreme Court of Virginia

## **IN RE: ORDER EXTENDING DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

On March 16, 2020, the Chief Justice, having received a request from the Governor pursuant to Va. Code § 17.1-330, entered an Order declaring a judicial emergency, recognizing the need to protect the health and safety of court employees, litigants, attorneys, judges, and the general public. After careful consideration and review, the Justices of this Court hereby unanimously ORDER that the declaration of judicial emergency be in effect and continue beginning April 6 through April 26, 2020, for all district and circuit courts of the Commonwealth.

Except as provided in this order, the courts and clerks' offices shall remain operational and provide services required by law while, at the same time, maintaining protections for the health and safety of court users and personnel. With the exception of matters enumerated herein, all applicable deadlines, time schedules and filing requirements, including any applicable statute of limitations which would otherwise run during the period this order is in effect, are hereby tolled and extended, pursuant to Va. Code § 17.1-330(D), for the duration of this Order.

All courts shall implement the following measures during this extended period absent a specific exception as listed below.

1. The court shall continue all civil, traffic and criminal matters, including jury trials, except for emergency and other matters as provided in this Order. For example, routine proceedings, including but not limited to non-emergency: warrants in debt, unlawful detainers, issuance of garnishments and writs of eviction shall be continued during the period this Order is in effect.
2. In any matter heard or considered by a court as provided in this order, judges shall exercise their discretion as necessary in determining whether the matter is urgent and must be heard

without delay in order to protect important liberty and constitutional interests and the health and safety of the parties, and others necessarily involved and affected by the proceedings.

3. The court's determination that a criminal case must be heard in order to avoid violating a defendant's right to a speedy trial shall be made by the presiding judge on a case by case basis. Among other things, considerations may include the liberty interests of the defendant, and the health and safety of the parties, attorneys, court personnel, and others necessarily involved and the ability of the court to safely proceed, taking into account the ability of the court to use technology as authorized by law, social distancing and other measures.
4. The court shall give precedence on the docket to emergency matters including, but are not limited to, quarantine or isolation matters, criminal arraignments, bail reviews, protective order cases, emergency child custody or protection cases, civil commitment hearings, petitions for temporary injunctive relief, proceedings related to emergency protection of elderly or vulnerable persons, petitions for appointment of a guardian or conservator, and proceedings necessary to safeguard applicable constitutional protections. Judges should exercise their discretion with regard to holding ongoing jury trials, grand jury proceedings, cases where the defendant is incarcerated, foster care cases, and child dependency cases. The exercise of discretion should focus primarily on considerations of the liberty and constitutional interests at stake, the health and safety of the parties, attorneys, court personnel, and others necessarily involved, and the ability of the court to safely proceed, taking into account the ability of the court to use technology as authorized by law, social distancing and other measures.
5. To the extent authorized by law, all matters that a court hears pursuant to this Order should be conducted by two-way electronic audio-visual communication, if available. The parties, attorneys, witnesses and others should be allowed to appear by such two-way electronic audio-visual communication in order to reduce or eliminate the need for parties, attorneys and others necessarily involved to physically appear in the courthouse. If a party, witness, or other

participant is unable to participate via the provided secure communication platform such as Polycom or Webex, if available, then, upon request to the court, they may participate by telephone. Requests to participate by telephone should be liberally granted.

6. The court shall continue all ceremonies, such as specialty court graduations and juvenile licensing ceremonies.
7. The court shall limit courtroom attendance in any matters that cannot be continued to attorneys, parties, necessary witnesses, interpreters, court personnel, court reporters, bailiffs and those deemed necessary by the presiding judge, and members of the press where permitted by law.
8. The court should issue summonses in lieu of capiases for failure to appear.
9. For jury trials that cannot be continued, the court should excuse or postpone jury service for jurors who are in a high-risk category as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/>, or who are ill, caring for someone who is ill, or are caring for children under the age of 16.
10. The court should require attorneys to use e-Filing if available.
11. The court should require individuals with legitimate court business who are ill, caring for someone who is ill, or who are otherwise in a high-risk category, as defined by the CDC, to call the clerk of court or other appropriate court personnel to request an appropriate accommodation.
12. The court shall consult with the sheriff about posting signage at all public entry points advising individuals not to enter the building if they have, within the previous 14 days:
  - a. visited China, Iran, South Korea, any European countries, or any other high-risk countries identified by the CDC;
  - b. traveled domestically within the United States where COVID-19 has sustained widespread community transmission;
  - c. been asked to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor by any doctor, hospital, or health agency;

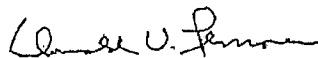
- d. been diagnosed with, or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with, COVID-19;
- e. experienced a fever, cough, or shortness of breath; or
- f. resided with or been in close contact with any person in the above-mentioned categories.

Individuals attempting to enter the court in violation of these protocols shall be denied entrance by a bailiff or court security officer, and will be directed to contact the clerk's office by telephone or other remote means to inform the clerk of their business before the court so as to receive further instruction regarding alternate arrangements for court access.

- 13. The sheriff and/or bailiffs shall prohibit individuals or groups from congregating anywhere in the courthouse, and require social distancing throughout the courthouse, including inside the courtroom.
- 14. Nothing in this Order shall preclude the chief district and chief circuit judges from implementing additional local policies as needed, and as allowed by law.
- 15. If a court finds it necessary to limit access to the court clerk's office for any time during the scope of this order, the clerk's office shall, nonetheless remain accessible during regular business hours by telephone and email, with such contact information posted on the Internet and at any public entrance(s). If available, drop boxes should be used for any conventionally filed documents and clerks shall take steps to safely accommodate any individual(s) requiring access for important matters, including but not limited to, title or record searches and recordation of land records.

This Order shall be effective beginning April 6 through April 26, 2020. This Order may be extended for additional periods as provided in Va. Code § 17.1-330. It is so ORDERED.

THE SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA



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CHIEF JUSTICE DONALD W. LEMONS

Entered 3/27/2020

**VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY**

**IN RE: CLOSING OF CIRCUIT COURT CLERK'S OFFICE TO  
THE GENERAL PUBLIC PURSUANT TO THE  
MARCH 16, 2020 AND MARCH 27, 2020 ORDERS**

WHEREAS, the Director of Emergency Management for Mecklenburg County has issued a proclamation declaring a Local State of Emergency dated March 20, 2020; and

WHEREAS, part of that declaration is that access to the county buildings by the general public be prohibited and;

WHEREAS, the Chief Justice of the Virginia Supreme Court entered an Order declaring a Judicial Emergency on March 16, 2020 and that said Order was extended by Order dated March 27, 2020 and:

WHEREAS, Mecklenburg County Circuit Court and the Clerks' Office of said Court wish to continue operating pursuant to the two Declarations of the Judicial Emergency entered by the Chief Justice on March 16, 2020 and March 27, 2020;

It is therefore ORDERED that access to the Mecklenburg County Circuit Court and the Clerks' Office of said Court by the general public is hereby prohibited pending further action by the Director of Emergency Management and further Orders of this Court. It is further ORDERED that the Clerk's Office shall remain open and continue operating. Further, the Mecklenburg County Circuit Court Clerk's Office shall continue to be accessible by phone, email, and drop box and shall provide those critical services pursuant to the Virginia Supreme Court Orders of March 16, 2020 and March 27, 2020.

ENTERED THIS 31<sup>st</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 2020

  
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S. ANDERSON NELSON, JUDGE