PRESS RELEASE

New York State
Unified Court System

Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge

Contact:
Lucian Chalfen,
Public Information Director
Arlene Hackel, Deputy Director
(212) 428-2500

www.nycourts.gov/press

Date: June 9, 2020

State Courts in New York City to Begin Gradual Return to In-Person Courthouse Operations

Judges and Designated Staff to Return to Their Courthouses

NEW YORK CITY−As New York City steadily recovers from the COVID pandemic, Chief Judge Janet DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks today announced that judges and designated staff in the City's five boroughs−which have met all the Governor's established safety benchmarks−will return to their courthouses beginning Wednesday, June 10.

While remaining open for business throughout the pandemic, state courts in New York City had limited their operations, consolidating court facilities, implementing and expanding virtual court operations, and taking a wide range of other measures to restrict courthouse traffic and contain the spread of COVID-19. With guidance from public health officials, plans to safely resume more normalized court operations have been ongoing.

Starting tomorrow, New York State court system judges, chambers staff and support staff in the City's five boroughs will return to their courthouses. Courthouse areas that will be used in this first phase include judges' chambers, clerks' offices and back offices.

Physical distancing and other steps restricting courthouse traffic will be enforced to protect the health and safety of judges and staff, attorneys, litigants and members of the public. Among other safety measures:

- Non-employee court visitors will be required to undergo COVID-19 screening before entering the courthouse.
- All staff who interact with court visitors must wear a mask.
- Anyone entering the courthouse will be required to wear a mask.
- Courthouse areas will be carefully marked to ensure proper physical distancing.
- Court facilities will be regularly sanitized.
- Acrylic barriers, hand sanitizer dispensers and other safety features will be installed in courthouse areas as needed.

During this initial phase, all court business will be conducted virtually to minimize foot traffic. For unrepresented litigants who lack the technology to access services remotely, courthouse space will be allocated where they can safely access essential court services.

Emphasizing the need to proceed cautiously to avert a resurgence of the virus, Chief Judge DiFiore said, “We will rigorously monitor safety protocols and day-to-day operations, carefully balancing the justice needs of those served by our New York City courts with the safety of all those who work in and visit courthouses in the five boroughs.”

Added Judge Marks, “As we have been doing in courts outside New York City, which are now making a smooth transition to Phase Two of a return to limited in-person operations, we shall re-establish in-court operations in New York City with a constant focus on health and safety, adapting protocols and facilities as needed.”

# # #