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PRESS RELEASE

Supreme Judicial Court Issues Updated Order Regarding State Court Operations During The Pandemic

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

4/27/2020

Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court

Appeals Court

Executive Office of the Trial Court

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BOSTON, MA — The Supreme Judicial Court today **issued an updated order** (/supreme-judicial-court-rules/supreme-judicial-court-updated-order-regarding-court-operations-under), which will be effective May 4, 2020, regarding the operation of Massachusetts state courts and courthouses during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the new order, until at least June 1, 2020, all courts of the Commonwealth will continue to be open to conduct court business, but courthouses will continue to be closed to the general public, except where entry is required to address emergency matters that cannot be addressed virtually (by telephone, videoconference, email, or comparable means, or through the electronic filing system).

Jury trials in both criminal and civil cases in state courts are postponed to a date no earlier than July 1, 2020. All bench trials, in both criminal and civil cases are postponed to a date no earlier than June 1, unless they may be conducted virtually by agreement of the parties and of the court. The new order also extends various deadlines.

Today's SJC order also directs Trial Court departments to identify categories of non-emergency matters that they will attempt to address virtually, where it is practicable to do so, and to provide clear guidance to the public and members of the bar regarding what those categories will be by posting periodic notices to the **judiciary's COVID-19 webpage**

(/guides/court-system-response-to-covid-19). The Supreme Judicial Court and Appeals Court will continue to conduct oral arguments virtually in non-emergency matters.

All court clerks', registers', and recorder's offices shall continue to conduct court business -- to accept the filing of pleadings and other documents in emergency and identified non-emergency matters, to schedule and facilitate hearings, to issue orders, to answer questions from attorneys, litigants, and the general public, and to conduct other necessary business of the respective court. All such business will be conducted virtually, except when the filing of pleadings and other documents in emergency matters cannot be accomplished virtually.

All orders, standing orders, guidelines, and notices issued by any court department or appellate court in response to the pandemic, as well as all amendments, modifications, and supplements are posted upon issuance on the **judiciary's COVID-19 webpage** (/guides/court-system-response-to-covid-19).

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Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court
(/orgs/massachusetts-supreme-judicial-court)

The Supreme Judicial Court is the Commonwealth's highest appellate court.

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Appeals Court (/orgs/appeals-court)

The Appeals Court is the Commonwealth's intermediate appellate court.

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Executive Office of the Trial Court

(/orgs/executive-office-of-the-trial-court)

The Executive Office of the Trial Court facilitates communication and enables joint leadership of the Trial Court by the Chief Justice of the Trial Court and the Court Administrator.

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Massachusetts Court System (/orgs/massachusetts-court-system)

The Massachusetts court system consists of the Supreme Judicial Court, the Appeals Court, the Executive Office of the Trial Court, the 7 Trial Court departments, the Massachusetts Probation Service, and the Office of Jury Commissioner.

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Court system response to COVID-19

(https://www.mass.gov/guides/court-system-response-to-covid-19)