

Justice of the Peace Court Re-opening Plan for Criminal and Truancy Locations

All The Justice of the Peace Court criminal and truancy court locations will open June 15, 2020 with some changes to their usual operations:

- All visitors will be screened by Court Security Officers for COVID-19 symptoms
 - The Court will provide anyone denied entrance with information on how to contact the Court
- Social distancing will limit the number of persons allowed in court lobbies and courtrooms
- The Court is testing ways to conduct virtual proceedings using apps like Skype and Zoom to speed the processing of cases and reduce the need for litigants to appear in court
 - You may be offered the chance to appear before a judge online
- The Court is exploring new ways to resolve cases without appearing in court, including online dispute resolution (ODR) and alternative dispute resolution (ADR)
 - The Court will provide more information after evaluating these processes
 - Please check our website, <https://www.courts.delaware.gov/locations/jpcourt>, for updates

Proceedings scheduled before the shutdown were rescheduled and defendants notified of their new court dates. Proceedings for cases originating during the shutdown have been scheduled and defendants notified. Case types are:

- Traffic
- Criminal (arraignments and trials)
- DUIs
- Red-light Appeals
- Truancy

The Court will do as much business as possible using video technology

- During the shutdown, the Court worked with law enforcement and defendants to use virtual proceedings to process cases where plea offers were made to defendants
 - The Court will continue this practice for traffic, criminal, and DUI cases as much as possible to reduce the number of persons required to appear in court
 - Criminal arraignments will be done by video when possible regardless of whether a plea offer is made
 - Where video cannot be used, in-court procedures will be scheduled using courtroom safety protocols (social distancing, masks, protective barriers, etc.)
- Persons appealing red-light tickets have the option to plead “responsible” (guilty) without coming to court or request a hearing in court
- Truancy cases not requiring a face-to-face appearance will be done by video. All other cases will be scheduled for a courtroom appearance
- Trials will be scheduled using social distancing standards. Trials may be scheduled in evenings and on weekends to help eliminate any backlogs

Please contact the Court location handling your case if you have any questions.