



Honorable Duncan M. Beagle
Honorable F. Kay Behm
Honorable Celeste D. Bell
Honorable B. Chris Christenson
Honorable Joseph J. Farah

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DUNCAN M. BEAGLE - CHIEF JUDGE
BARBARA A. MENEAR - COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Honorable John A. Gadola
Honorable Elizabeth A. Kelly
Honorable Mark W. Latchana
Honorable David J. Newblatt
Honorable Brian S. Pickell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2.5.2021

**GENESEE COUNTY CIRCUIT and PROBATE COURTS
PHASE 2, PLAN TO RETURN TO FULL CAPACITY**

Effective Tuesday, February 16, 2021, the Genesee County Circuit and Probate Courts will continue to conduct court proceedings virtually to the maximum extent possible.

However, limited in-person proceedings will be expanded if the courtroom or hearing room permits six-foot distancing at all times. Face coverings will be required in a manner consistent with the directives from the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO). Face coverings will not be provided by the court at the point of entrance.

The above provisions are consistent with Genesee County Phase Two (*Return*), Joint Local Administrative Order 2021-02J/2021-02J. This Order applies to the Genesee County Circuit and Probate Courts.

After reviewing the current COVID19 data for Genesee County, Chief Judge Duncan M. Beagle determined that the health data had sufficiently improved to permit additional in-person proceedings where constitutional rights were involved, child welfare or other family interests were present and further adjournments were not in the best interest of the parties.

It is expected that criminal jury trials will resume on March 2, 2021, if the health data continues to support the resumption of jury trials. The local health officer will be consulted before a final decision is reached.

Judge Beagle stated, "the circuit court has a serious backlog of criminal cases that need to be resolved, many by a jury trial. The judges look forward to being able to ramp up and tackle the caseload, as soon as we are permitted. Likewise, there are cases in the family division and probate court where the parties have been waiting for a variety of hearings or trials that have not been possible due to restrictions on in-person proceedings."

The Courts will remain open and continue operations via Zoom to the maximum extent possible. Individual judicial offices will be the contact for inquiries regarding scheduling for particular cases.

Public access to the courthouse requires entrants to register their contact information in case the same is required for contact tracing due to a potential COVID19 exposure.

Effective February 16, 2021, the **law library** in the Courthouse will be re-open by advance appointment only on a limited basis.

For further information regarding all Circuit Court operations, including law library access and new filings, consult the court webpage: 7thCircuitCourt.com.

For further information regarding all Probate Court operations, consult the court webpage: gcprobatecourt.com