

News Advisory

From the Rhode Island Judiciary



Emergency court measures extended to June 1

May 15, 2020: An executive order issued today by Rhode Island Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell continues emergency measures that were first implemented on March 17 and were due to expire on May 17. The order addresses the gradual continuity of court services and operations that had been curtailed as the pandemic spread in Rhode Island.

Highlights of today's executive order include:

- An extension of emergency measures until June 1.
- Grand jury proceedings may begin starting May 18.
- Criminal trials scheduled to begin after March 16 may begin no earlier than August 1.
 - Civil jury trials may start no earlier than August 1.
 - In-person bench trials may begin June 1.
 - The courts will slowly increase the number of in-person hearings in the courthouses, based on newly calculated hallway and courtroom capacities derived from social distancing standards.
- The McGrath Judicial Complex (Washington County) and the Murray Judicial Complex (Newport County) will remain closed until September 8.
- Evictions may be filed starting on June 1. The District Court will determine the appropriate protocol and orders for resuming evictions. A District Court work group has been developing protocols over the past several weeks, with a number of stakeholders taking part.
 - The courts will continue to make technological accommodations to make more remote hearings accessible to litigants and the public.
 - Procedures for gaining limited access to courthouses, including the news media.
 - The chief judges of the lower courts are authorized to issue administrative orders for specific matters within their jurisdictions, using as guidance the Chief Justice's executive order.
 - Several other provisions.

The executive order may be viewed on the Judiciary's website: www.courts.ri.gov

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