

Update on COVID-19 and Kentucky Courts

Latest news from Supreme Court and Administrative Office of the Courts

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For Immediate Release

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Supreme Court provides guidance on jury trials as courts plan to gradually expand operations starting June 1

FRANKFORT, Ky., May 19, 2020 — Today the Supreme Court provided guidance on jury trials in Administrative Order 2020-40, dated May 19, 2020, and effective June 1, 2020. The complete order can be found [here](#) and the highlights are below:

- Jury trials shall be postponed and rescheduled for no sooner than August 1, 2020.
- Grand jury proceedings may begin effective June 1, 2020.
- Cases where the 60-day period in RCr 5.22(3) or an extension thereof was tolled by operation of Administrative Order 2020-28 must be presented to the grand jury on or before July 30, 2020.
- Existing grand jury panels may be extended at the discretion of the court, subject to the 20-day limitation set out in AP Part II, Sec. 19(3).
- If an existing grand jury panel cannot be extended, the order provides guidance on how to orient a new jury panel.
- Jurors who are ill, caring for someone who is ill, in a high-risk category, unable to wear a facial covering, or who will suffer further economic loss as a result of jury service shall have their service postponed or excused.
- Strict health and safety requirements – including mandatory use of facial coverings by jurors, social distancing and disinfecting – must be followed for all grand jury proceedings.

On May 15, the Supreme Court issued [Administrative Order 2020-39](#), which highlighted the health and safety requirements for expanding court operations beginning June 1. The Supreme Court will address other legal matters, such as evictions, in subsequent orders as the Judicial Branch's three Reopening Task Forces continue to meet and make recommendations.

You can find ongoing court updates on the [COVID-19 and the Courts](#) webpage.

About the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the state court of last resort and the final interpreter of Kentucky law. Seven justices sit on the Supreme Court and all seven justices rule on appeals that come before the court. The justices are elected from seven appellate districts and serve eight-year terms. A chief justice, chosen for a four-year term by fellow justices, is the administrative head of the state's court system and is responsible for its operation. The Supreme Court may order a ruling or opinion to be published, which means that the ruling becomes the case law governing all similar cases in the future in Kentucky.

Administrative Office of the Courts

The Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort is the operations arm of the state court system. The AOC supports the activities of nearly 3,400 court system employees and 406 elected justices, judges and circuit court clerks. As the fiscal agent for the state court system, the AOC executes the Judicial Branch budget.

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