



St. Louis County Circuit Court – 21st Judicial Circuit
Manchester Municipal Division

200 Highlands Blvd Dr. Manchester, MO 63011

Phone: (636) 207-2832 Fax: (636) 207-2826

Dear Ms. Dotson,

The City of Manchester is committed to the health and safety of its employees and the public at large. Pursuant to Administrative Order Number 30, the City of Manchester Municipal Court shall not commence with in person proceedings until the St. Louis County Circuit Court enters Operating Phase Three (as described in the Missouri Supreme Court May 4, 2020 Operational Directives). Moreover, the City of Manchester shall not commence proceedings until the municipal court receives written approval from the St. Louis County Circuit Court of its Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that describes measures that must be taken to ensure the Courts are engaged in safe practices as recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

The City of Manchester will continue to consult with the local partners and rely on local health officials or departments and CDC guidance to adapt court operating decisions to local health conditions. Moreover, the City of Manchester will reexamine and update its local court orders and Covid-19 notices as appropriate. Fortunately, the Municipal Court of the City of Manchester enjoys a large courtroom venue that is capable of large-capacity limits and social distancing. Currently, the Municipal Court has a capacity of one hundred and fifty-eight (158) people. Traditionally, the docket enjoys approximately 30 to 40 people in attendance. Usual court staff consists of three people including Judge, Court Administrator and clerk. Therefore, the City of Manchester's building is more than adequate to ensure social distancing. Upon the designation of Operating Phase Three in St. Louis County and approval by the Corona Virus Committee, the City of Manchester's in person court appearances will be conducted as follows:

- The Courthouse, which also houses the City of Manchester Police Department, will continue its posted signage on the front door and in the lobby area which requires a mask for those individuals who are not vaccinated. Those who are vaccinated, still have the option of wearing masks or other facial coverings.
- Municipal court will allow up to 50 people into Court at one time. Chairs will be placed a minimum of six feet apart to allow for social distancing.
- Ten additional spots in the lobby area will be designated a minimum of six feet apart to allow for social distancing. As ten litigants resolve their cases, an additional ten people will be allowed in the Court itself, keeping a maximum of fifty people within the court room itself.
- Attorneys appearing without clients will be designated to a specified hallway outside of the courtroom, with designated areas six feet apart. Attorneys present with their client will be counted in the fifty-person limit.
- Plexiglass will be placed between all court staff and Judge with designated areas and a minimum of six feet to litigants appearing on their case before the Judge.
- At the conclusion of their court matter, litigants will be directed to the exit which allows for social distancing.

- Additional monthly virtual court docket via Webex will be offered upon request to vulnerable litigants, witnesses, victims, attorneys and other individuals involved in court proceedings.
- Judicial employees will continue to adhere to social distancing guidelines in court facilities.
- Litigants in excess of the sixty-person limit allowed in the courtroom and lobby area shall be directed to line up outside in designated sidewalk area. Additional court personnel will regulate the entrance and exit of litigants to allow for social distancing.
- A Notice of Rights will be posted in the lobby outside the courtroom.
- When a person's name is called, he or she will approach the bench. The location will be marked so that the person knows exactly where to stand. Upon entering his or her plea, court personnel will provide preprinted forms with either a new date or the amount of fines and costs and will place it on the table for the litigant to pick up before exiting the building. There will be no hand-to-hand transactions between court personnel and litigants.
- Pursuant to CDC guidelines and Department of Health directives, the building will be cleaned and sanitized frequently.

The City of Manchester, staff and employees look forward to resuming in person proceedings. We are committed to adhering to all local rules so that litigants and staff can continue to provide a safe environment for municipal court.

Sincerely yours,

By Charles W. Billings
Charles W. Billings, Judge 5/20/21