

## **Fourth Circuit Court**

Fourth Circuit Court intends to hear all scheduled matters. Unless the Court, after conferencing with pro se litigants and/or counsel, determines that an “in-person” hearing or trial is necessary, the Court intends to continue to conduct trials and hearings by alternate means, such as the use of telephone, teleconferencing, video-conferencing, or other means that do not involve in-person contact. In the event of an in-person proceeding, only the parties to the cases and necessary witnesses shall be allowed in the building. In order to provide the Court with the ability to facilitate alternate means of holding hearings, all litigants and counsel shall provide phone numbers and email addresses where they can be reached to facilitate scheduling and conducting court appearances. The required information may be sent to Rachel King using this email address - (Rachel.King@knoxcounty.org). In order to help the Court determine whether an in-person hearing or any hearing at all is necessary for a motion to be decided, responses to motions must be filed no less than fifteen calendar days after a motion is filed or five calendar days before the motion is set to be heard. The Court reserves the right to decide motions on the pleadings.

Orders of Protection will continue to be held in person. Only the parties to the cases and necessary witnesses shall be allowed in the building. The docket will be split into morning and afternoon dockets, with the number of cases controlled to ensure that proper social distancing can be maintained both outside and inside the courtroom while the parties wait for their cases to be heard.

Counsel and litigants are encouraged to bring and use any protective personal equipment that they deem necessary for their well-being to any in-person court appearance. Any litigants who believe that they are at an increased risk because of the virus, have been exposed to the virus, or are experiencing any sign of illness, shall immediately inform the Court Clerk and opposing parties or counsel of this fact and shall not appear in person.