
Courts, Your Lawsuit and the Impact of COVID-19

By Kevin A. Fanning, Linda M. Watson / Mar 16, 2020

With the health and safety of communities, court employees, jurors, parties, witnesses, and attorneys in mind, judicial systems around the country at the local, state and federal level have all issued notices advising of new processes and procedures to address COVID-19. While this is a fluid situation that is changing by the day and sometimes by the hour, Clark Hill attorneys are being kept up to date on the status of each court within our jurisdictions, along with the restrictions that have been issued and their enforcement. Clark Hill litigation attorneys are available to discuss the status of your matters and the effect these temporary changes may have on your case timeline. We will continue to handle your matters with the utmost attention and will strive to maintain exceptional advocacy on your behalf during this pandemic.

Some examples of some recent restrictions that have been implemented include:

Visitation Restrictions: Some courts, including federal courts, have restricted visitors as follows:

1. Visitors at courts must advise upon entering whether they've been in one of the following countries within the last 14 days:

- China
- S. Korea
- Italy
- Iran

(This list may be updated as further guidance is received from the CDC)

2. Persons who reside with, or have had close contact with, someone who has been in one of the countries listed above within the last 14 days.

3. Persons who have traveled domestically within the U.S. where COVID-19 has sustained widespread community transmission.

4. Persons who have been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital or health agency.

5. Persons who have been diagnosed with, or have had contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Jury Trials

In many courts, jury trials have been suspended or adjourned in civil and criminal cases, except for criminal cases where a defendant is in custody.

Hearings

Many courts are still conducting in-person hearings, although this may change in the next week. Other courts are conducting remote hearings when possible or adjourning hearings involving vulnerable persons. We will keep you advised of these changes in advance of all hearings in your matters.

Filings

Since most court filings are now completed electronically, courts are still processing case submissions in new and existing lawsuits. Unless otherwise notified by the court, all court orders, including scheduling orders, must be complied with by all parties.

If you have any questions about the status of any matter within your jurisdiction or have general questions about changes to court operations, please call us. Our Clark Hill litigation attorneys are closely monitoring these changes from each of our offices across the United States and in Ireland. We will continue to keep you updated as things change.