



# UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

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## **Current Operational Status of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Updated September 7, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented substantial challenges to the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland, just as it has for all courts. The Court has modified operations as appropriate in response to changing conditions presented by the pandemic.

The District is currently operating in modified Phase Three of the District's [recovery plan](#), supplemented by [Amended Standing Order 2021-07](#), which relaxed some mitigative measures in light of improving virus metrics, increasing vaccination rates, and the lifting of statewide and local restrictions.

This operational status report provides a summary of the Court's current operations. All pertinent Bankruptcy Court and District Court orders and notices are on the Bankruptcy Court's website, available by clicking [here](#), and should be referred to for more complete information.

### **Bankruptcy Hearings**

There are no pandemic related administrative or standing orders currently in effect that automatically continue bankruptcy court hearings or deadlines. Most hearings in Bankruptcy Court are being conducted as video conferences on the ZoomGov platform, unless the parties

are otherwise notified. Instructions and resources for participating in virtual hearings are posted here – [www.mdb.uscourts.gov/hearings](http://www.mdb.uscourts.gov/hearings), and the Court’s Virtual Hearing Policy may be accessed by [clicking here](#). Bar members are encouraged to review the materials posted on this webpage and are expected to be fully capable of participating in the virtual hearings. Any parties seeking to have their matter heard “in person” should contact the presiding Judge’s courtroom deputy or chambers, copying all pertinent parties.

The Bankruptcy Court continues to be available to hear and resolve emergency matters, including first day filings. Any emergency matters should be filed consistent with past practice and brought to the attention of the courtroom deputy for the presiding judge or the clerk of court. The Court prefers that such communications be made by email where possible.

**Chief Judge Thomas J. Catliota**  
Rita Hester, Courtroom Deputy  
[hearings\\_tjc@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:hearings_tjc@mdb.uscourts.gov)  
(301) 344-3495

**Judge Nancy V. Alquist**  
Brenda J. Wolfe, Courtroom Deputy  
[hearings\\_nva@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:hearings_nva@mdb.uscourts.gov)  
(410) 962-4439

**Judge David E. Rice**  
Cherita Scott, Courtroom Deputy  
[hearings\\_der@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:hearings_der@mdb.uscourts.gov)  
(410) 962-7769

**Judge Michelle M. Harner**  
Anna Marie Komisarek, Courtroom Deputy  
[hearings\\_mmh@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:hearings_mmh@mdb.uscourts.gov)  
(410) 962-2966

**Judge Lori S. Simpson**  
Gloria Bellman, Courtroom Deputy  
[Hearings\\_LSS@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:Hearings_LSS@mdb.uscourts.gov)  
(301) 344-8031

**Judge Maria Ellena Chavez-Ruark**  
Jennifer Whitfield, Courtroom Deputy  
[hearings\\_mcr@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:hearings_mcr@mdb.uscourts.gov)  
(301) 344-0585

### **Deadlines Related to Meetings of Creditors**

The United States Trustee issued a notice that it will hold all Chapter 7, 12, and 13 Section 341 Meetings remotely, by telephone or Zoom, commencing April 13, 2020 and during the period of the President’s “Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the

Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak” issued March 13, 2020, and ending on the date that is 60 days after such declaration terminates. However, the U.S. Trustee may approve a request by a trustee in a particular case to continue the Section 341 meeting to an in-person meeting in a manner that complies with local public health guidance, if the U.S. Trustee determines that an in-person examination of the debtor is required to ensure the completeness of the meeting or the protection of estate property. Instructions and information to participate in the remote Meetings can be found [here](#).

### **Courthouse and Clerk’s Office Operations**

The Bankruptcy Court’s public intake counters are open Monday through Friday (except for federal holidays) from 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. Effective September 8, 2021, all persons entering the courthouse must be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, or (for an interim period) provide a negative COVID-19 test result from a test administered no more than 72 hours prior. See the [Court Vaccination Policy](#) for more details. The Clerk’s Office is also open to the public through telephone access during regular business hours. Drop boxes are also located in the lobby of each courthouse, and will be available to midnight in Baltimore and 6:00 p.m. in Greenbelt. Unrepresented parties can also electronically submit documents via the Court’s [Electronic Document Submission System Pilot Program \(EDSS\)](#). CM/ECF will continue to be available for electronic filing.

### **Affidavits Encouraged to Increase Social Distancing**

The Court anticipates that parties will be encouraged to maximize social distancing for the foreseeable future. Counsel are strongly encouraged to file motions or objections with

affidavits or declarations and authenticated documentary evidence that may establish a prima facie case sufficient to enable the Court to rule on the matter without live testimony, as appropriate.

### **Other Pertinent Changes**

The Court has entered other Administrative Orders, as follows:

[Administrative Order 20-05](#) – temporarily suspending the requirement for counsel to obtain original ink “wet” signatures on petitions, Chapter 13 plans, declarations, and other documents described in the order.

[Administrative Order 20-07](#) – providing that Local Bankruptcy Rule 5073-1 applies to all court proceedings however conducted, and prohibiting any person or device, other than official electronic recorders employed by the Court, from recording any court proceeding, whether conducted in court, on telephone, or by video conference

[Administrative Order 20-13](#) – authorizing as presumptively reasonable certain attorneys’ fees in Chapter 13 cases related to work necessitated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, as a supplement to Appendix F of the Local Bankruptcy Rules.