

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Judiciary to Resume In-Person Jury Trials Beginning Monday

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The V.I. Superior Court on St. Croix By. FILE PHOTO

Administrator of Courts Regina Petersen has advised the public and members of the Virgin Islands Bar Association that the Judiciary will resume in-person proceedings and jury trials effective 12:00 a.m. on Monday, January 31 in accordance with the new measures outlined in Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 2022-0002.

The new measures are as follows:

All proceedings in the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands and the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands, as well as proceedings before the Board on Professional Responsibility, the Commission on Judicial Conduct, the Board on the Unauthorized Practice of Law, the Committee of Bar Examiners, and the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, may be held in-person and must be conducted in accordance with all pertinent health and safety orders, protocols, and administrative directives. Jury trials shall occur on staggered schedules coordinated with and approved by the Presiding Judge with the assistance of the Administrative Judge, Administrator of Courts, and the Clerk of the Superior Court, so as to minimize the number of individuals congregating in Judicial Branch facilities.

The Supreme Court oral arguments scheduled to be held virtually on February 8, 2022, shall continue to remain a virtual proceeding and all other proceedings already scheduled for a remote hearing as of the effective date of the order shall remain set for a remote hearing until and unless the presiding judicial officer issues an appropriate order directing that it be heard in-person. All judicial officers, and court boards, commissions, and committees retain the discretion to schedule any matter, other than a jury trial, for a remote hearing, and are strongly encouraged to do so.

All Judicial Branch facilities shall be open to judicial officers, court staff, attorneys, litigants, and members of the public for the purpose of conducting official business, and all Judicial Branch services shall be made available to the public in-person. All health and safety protocols previously adopted by the Administrator of Courts, including those pertaining to the wearing of face masks and social distancing guidelines remain in effect.

Litigants, attorneys, and the public are further advised that all filing and other deadlines remain in effect and are not automatically suspended, tolled, or extended. Individuals whose personal circumstances require an extension of time or other accommodations must file an appropriate motion with the court for such relief.