



What to Expect with In-Person Oral Argument at the Tenth District Court of Appeals during COVID-19

Masks Required. Franklin County Administration is STRICTLY ENFORCING the order of the Director of the Ohio Department of Health and the Columbus City Council ordinance to REQUIRE FACIAL COVERINGS in the Franklin County Government Center and the County Courthouse Complex. If you need to come to the Court and do not have a facial covering, please contact the Court at 614-525-3580 or the community resources listed [here](#) for information on how to obtain a facial covering before coming to the Courthouse.

Security and Lobby. Persons entering the Franklin County Government Center, will be required to pass through security. In the security line and the lobby, social distancing will be required. Security can be busy at peak hours, so please plan for extra time.

Elevators. Franklin County Administration is only permitting 3 people per elevator. With this in mind, as the Courtrooms are located on the 23rd floor, please plan for extra time.

HVAC and other Public Facilities Measures. County Administration has informed the Court that the Public Facilities Management Team ("PFM") continues to perform regular preventative maintenance on the building ventilation/HVAC systems, and also has added additional external (outside) airflow in excess of code requirements wherever possible. PFM will increase daily surface cleaning of railings, door handles, elevator buttons, and bathrooms in accordance with Public Health recommendations.

Ben Franklin Dining Room Closed. Franklin County Administration has closed the Ben Franklin Dining Room on the 16th Floor until further notice.

Scheduling. In order to accommodate cleaning between oral arguments and prevent overcrowding in the Courtroom, in-person oral arguments will now be scheduled one at a time at 8:30, 10:00, 11:30 or 1:00. Please note that this scheduling differs from our past practice of scheduling three cases at 9:00 and three cases at 10:15.

Check-in with the Bailiff. Upon arriving on the 23rd floor, please check-in with the bailiff for oral argument before the Judges in Courtroom 23B. Masks and social distancing are required at check-in.

Courtroom 23B Measurements and Plexiglass. For reference, following are the measurements in Courtroom 23B.

- 6.5' between judges
- 14' between bench and podium
- 22' between bench and counsel table
- 9-18' between counsel tables
- 12' between the bailiff and nearest counsel
- 10' between the bailiff and the junior judge

Plexiglass has been installed between the Judges on their shared bench; otherwise, given the above measurements, no additional plexiglass has been installed in the Courtroom.

Removal of Center Podium and Remain at Counsel Table. The center podium has been removed. Counsel and pro se parties will be required to remain at their respective counsel tables when presenting oral arguments. Desk podiums are available on each counsel table which can be adjusted to accommodate standing during oral argument rather than remaining seated.

Masks Required while Presenting Oral Argument. Counsel and pro se parties must wear masks in the Courtrooms and while presenting oral argument.

Co-Counsel, Parties, Interested Persons and the Media. The Court encourages co-counsel (other than counsel who is presenting oral argument), parties, interested persons, and the media to consider listening to oral arguments remotely via the Court's simultaneous live-stream on YouTube. (See below.)

However, if co-counsel and parties wish to come to the Court, please remember generally there are only two counsel tables, and we will require social distancing in the Courtroom. Therefore, if there are multiple parties wishing to present oral argument and/or a request to split oral argument time – please contact the Court in advance if possible so that accommodations can be made for socially distanced spacing during multiple presentations of oral argument.

Simultaneous Live-streaming Oral Arguments on YouTube. The Court will simultaneously live-stream audio of the in-person oral arguments on YouTube so that co-counsel, parties, interested persons and the media can listen in remotely without having to come to the Courthouse. The Court's YouTube link can be found [here](#).

Gallery. Socially distanced spacing and seating has been marked in the Courtroom gallery. At present the gallery only accommodates socially distanced seating for 12 people.

Cleaning in between Oral Arguments. Counsel table and desk podiums will be cleaned by the Court in between oral arguments.

Accommodations and Continuance Policy. Counsel or pro se parties scheduled for in-person oral arguments may request accommodations for COVID-19 reasons. The Court's accommodations and continuance policy for COVID-19 reasons is as follows/can be found [here](#).

Conversion to Remote Oral Argument as Determined by the Court. Please be aware that if the Court determines that public health circumstances or guidelines require otherwise or in order to make accommodations for COVID-19 reasons, in-person oral argument may be converted to remote oral argument. If such determination or accommodation is made, the Court will notify the parties accordingly.

Questions. If you have questions about the foregoing, please contact the Court at 614-525-3580 or by emailing Court Administrator [Doug Eaton](#) or Deputy Court Administrator [Cindy Sgalla](#).