

State of Michigan  
**27th Judicial Circuit Court**  
County of Newaygo

**Plan to Return to Full Capacity – Phase Two (Forward) – May 24, 2021**



27th Circuit Court – Newaygo Administrative Order 2021- 09J  
78th District Court – Newaygo Administrative Order 2021- 08J  
Newaygo County Probate Court Administrative Order 2021- 03J

This order, once approved, rescinds the following Local Administrative Order – also known as the Return to Full Capacity – Phase 1 for the 27th Circuit Court (Newaygo County), 78th District Court (Newaygo County), and the Newaygo County Probate Court

Rescinds:

27th Circuit Court – Newaygo Administrative Order 2021-05J  
78th District Court – Newaygo Administrative Order 2021-05J  
Newaygo County Probate Court Administrative Order 2021-02J

In accordance with Administrative Order 2020-14, effective May 6, 2020, and upon approval of the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the chief judge of the Newaygo County Trial Court (27th Circuit Court – Newaygo, 78th District Court – Newaygo, and Newaygo County Probate Court) has consulted with the local health department and determined that gating criteria is satisfied as of May 20, 2021. Specifically:

1. There have been no COVID-19 confirmed or suspected cases in the court facility within a 14-day period; and,
2. There is 7-day average of 15% or less for positive tests as a percent of total tests; and,
3. There is a downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period (flat or increasing volume of tests); and,
4. State and local orders restricting movement and/or requiring shelter-in-place have been rescinded or limited and the SCAO has determined that existing orders would not prevent the court from implementing Phase Two requirements; and,
5. The chief judge has consulted with health authorities and obtained data (attached) confirming that regional health care facilities are able to treat all patients without crisis care; and,
6. The chief judge has consulted with health authorities and obtained data (attached) confirming that there is no evidence of COVID-19 rebound within the local community and no need to implement additional social distancing measures based upon a resurgence of infections in the local area.

- A. To protect the health and safety of employees and the public, the Newaygo County Trial Court has enacted the following protections:
1. Employees will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms. Employees who feel sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms will not report to work in accordance with the directives of the local health department and the most recent version of the Newaygo County Preparedness and Response Plan. Employees who feel sick or display symptoms at work will be sent home.<sup>1</sup>
  2. Court employees have been surveyed and those employees who have self-identified as a vulnerable employee and unable to return to work have been offered appropriate accommodations, including the ability to work remotely if their job lends itself to remote work.
  3. Employees will be encouraged to work remotely where feasible to facilitate social distancing among on-site staff.
  4. Face coverings for employees will be required in a manner consistent with the SCAO Return to Full Capacity Guide.
    - a. A face covering that complies with this administrative order is made of more than one layer of tightly woven fabric that covers the nose and mouth and fits securely on the face.
    - b. Face shields including those made of plastic and hybrid products that have fabric around the edges of the shield are not an acceptable replacement for a cloth face covering. According to the Centers for Disease Control there is currently not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of face shields for “source control.” If the employee provides medical documentation that they are unable to tolerate a cloth face covering, a face shield may be approved by the chief judge as part of an ADA request made in accordance with Newaygo County Policy.
    - c. Face coverings with exhalation vents or valves are not permitted.
    - d. Employees shall wear face coverings in the public areas of the court facilities. This includes courtrooms unless directed otherwise by the chief judge.
    - e. Employees with an office are not required to wear a face covering while they are alone in their offices. Face coverings are required if the employee is not alone in the office and six-foot social distancing cannot be maintained or the meeting will be longer than 15 minutes in duration.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance on COVID-19 symptoms is evolving rapidly. The most up-to-date information about symptoms of COVID-19 are available on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

- f. Employees without an office shall always wear a face covering while at their workstation.
  - g. Employees shall wear face coverings when they are in the common areas of the court offices.
5. All employees not self-identified as vulnerable will work regular working schedules.
  6. Employees will maintain six-foot social distancing practices in all meetings, offices, and court proceedings and shall wear face coverings. Employees in court facilities will always maintain social distancing of six feet and wear face coverings.
  7. Social distancing and safety measures may be enhanced if necessary upon further direction of the chief judge.
  8. The Newaygo County Trial Court has taken the following steps to ensure proper social distancing and employee safety:
    - a. Placed physical barriers between workspaces that are not at least six feet apart.
    - b. Fashioned physical barriers at the public windows to better control movement of documents in and out of the offices.
    - c. Provided moveable plexiglass barriers for use in the courtrooms as well as individual barriers that can be positioned in front of the judge, witnesses, parties, or attorneys as needed.
    - d. Marked the floor in common spaces to indicate six-foot intervals.
    - e. Required employees to wear face coverings while in public spaces and in areas where six-foot social distancing cannot be maintained.
    - f. Required employees handling mail to wear masks and gloves.
    - g. Provided webcams for employees who routinely meet with the public to assist them with meeting remotely as much as possible to avoid having the public in the inner office areas.
    - h. Implemented an employee arrival procedure for proper employee health screening.
    - i. Routine cleaning of common areas and items utilized by multiple employees (breakrooms, restrooms, courtrooms, etc.).
    - j. Provided personal protective equipment (PPE) (face coverings, gloves, etc.) and cleaning supplies for employees to protect themselves and others and clean their work areas whenever necessary.

- k. Encouraged frequent handwashing and cleansing of hands with hand sanitizer which is provided to employees.
  - l. Use of disinfectant sprayers to ensure common or open cubicle areas, offices, and the courtrooms are disinfected easily and regularly.
- 9. Employees will practice good hygiene through hand washing, frequent disinfecting of used items and surfaces, sneezing or coughing into a tissue or elbow, and avoiding touching their faces.
- 10. Employees will not travel for nonessential court business.
- 11. Quarantine and/or isolation requirements will be implemented consistent with the most current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and/or local public health officials.
  - a. The Newaygo County Trial Court has consulted with the local health department and the Newaygo County Administration Office in developing policies regarding personal travel by an employee outside of Michigan. Any quarantine and/or isolation requirements will be implemented consistent with the most current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, local public health officials, and Newaygo County Administration.
- 12. Employees have been trained regarding COVID-19. The training included good hygiene practices, updated personnel policies, and safety controls at the court facilities.
- 13. Court facilities have posted signage emphasizing proper handwashing.
- 14. Shared equipment will be cleaned and sanitized before each use. Examples of shared equipment include copiers, fax machines, and telephones used by more than one employee during a single shift or in consecutive shifts. This equipment should be wiped down with disinfectant or a disinfectant wipe between uses.
- 15. The court is following the Centers for Disease Control guidance on cleaning and disinfecting if the facility is exposed to COVID-19 in conjunction with the Newaygo County Administration Office.
- 16. The Newaygo County Trial Court has developed a contact tracing policy consistent with the Newaygo County Administration's COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (most recent version), the District 10 Health Department, and all SCAO recommendations. The chief judge may initiate additional contact tracing procedures as necessary to ensure employee and public safety. The Newaygo County Trial Court will implement contact tracing procedures after receiving notification that the court facility has had confirmed exposure to COVID-19. These procedures will help the court identify and notify individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and will identify exposure locations that need to be cleaned and disinfected pursuant to the Centers for Disease Control.

B. The Newaygo County Trial Court is maintaining the following measures related to public entry into court facilities:

1. The public will be screened by court personnel or security personnel prior to entering the court building. Screening questions will include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Do you have a fever greater than 100.4 degrees?

1. Visitor temperatures will be verified using a touchless kiosk in the entryway of the courthouse.

b. Do you have a cough or worsening cough (excluding chronic cough due to known medical reason)?

c. Do you have shortness of breath?

OR

d. Do you have at least two of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

e. Have you had any close contact in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and you are not fully vaccinated?

1. Close contact is defined as being within six feet of an individual who tests positive for COVID-19, with or without a face covering, for an accumulative of fifteen minutes or longer starting from two days before illness onset (for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

f. Have you traveled internationally in the last 14 days?

Any individual responding “yes” to the screening questions will not be allowed to enter the courthouse. Screening personnel will notify the court of any individual who does not pass the screening procedure. If the person came to the court to file documents, the court would accept those documents for filing or the drop box in the court’s lobby may be used. If the person was scheduled to appear as a party or witness in a court proceeding, the court will work to reschedule the hearing/trial as a remote proceeding or to a future date when the person may pass courthouse screening. The court must provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to any personnel responsible for in-person screening.

C. To facilitate the business of the court, the Newaygo County Trial Court is enacting the following measures related to court proceedings:

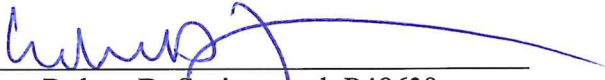
1. Proceedings will be conducted virtually to the maximum extent possible, consistent with Administrative Order No. 2020-6. Parties will be provided notice that their hearings are scheduled for remote appearances and will be provided with best practice information to ensure they are able to appear successfully as a remote participant.
2. In-person court proceedings will be allowed on a limited basis. In-person hearings are allowed for emergency hearings, matters deemed essential by the presiding judge and approved by the chief judge, and matters in which parties have the right to be present. Any in-person emergency, essential, or hearings where parties have the right to be present will adhere to moderate six-foot social distancing practices in the courtroom including the presiding judge and other essential staff. Any on-site visits or hearings will be scheduled so that there is adequate time in between hearings to allow for the impacted portion of the courtroom/room to be sanitized. Parties to the case and other necessary persons will be permitted first while adhering to six-foot social distancing practices. Non-party spectators will be encouraged to watch proceedings via livestreaming from the County of Newaygo website. If the non-party spectator does not have access to view the public livestream, and requests to be present in the courthouse, he/she will be placed in an alternate courtroom, if necessary and available, to watch the proceedings if his/her presence would violate the moderate six-foot social distancing practices. Face coverings will be required for court in a manner consistent with the SCAO Return to Full Capacity Guide and this local administrative order. Face coverings are required for employees, security, and visitors during any on-site visits.
3. Jury trials may be conducted in compliance with the current SCAO approved Local Administrative Order to Establish Parameters for Conducting In-Person Jury Proceedings During the COVID-19 Pandemic for Newaygo County.
4. Off-site visits with probationers and clients will continue utilizing remote methods whenever possible. Based on the unique circumstances of the case and services provided, in-person meetings may be required at times. When this is necessary social distancing practices consistent with this Local Administrative Order, Newaygo County's Preparedness and Response Plan (most recent version), and the health department will be adhered to for safety purposes.
5. The Newaygo County Trial Court has also taken protective measures to offer the public protection from the spread of COVID-19. There are numerous hand sanitation stations and restrooms for handwashing for visitors. Drinking fountains have been closed due to the higher risk of germ transmission. The courthouse has marked areas on the floor for visitors to stand to reinforce social distancing during their visit and has removed seating to provide better social distancing. Courtroom seating has been marked in six-foot increments to facilitate social distancing. Large venues and common areas in the courthouse (lobbies, hallways, etc.) will be open for use to the public for emergency, essential and/or any matters where

the parties have a right to be present. Members of the public are required to wear face coverings to the extent they can medically tolerate it. They will be provided by the court prior to entry.

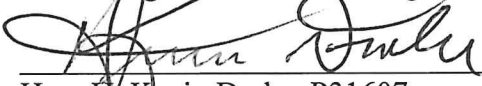
6. Pursuant to MCR 8.110(C), members of the public or staff who refuse to wear required face coverings or adhere to social distancing requirements may be asked to leave the court facility.
7. Any member of the public who is asked to leave the court facility must be offered an opportunity to conduct court business virtually, attend court proceedings virtually, file documents in an alternative manner, or confer with court administration to determine alternate arrangements for accessing the court.

The Newaygo County Trial Court is regularly meeting with local public health officials to monitor local public health conditions related to COVID-19 and are continuously evaluating data to assess their readiness to proceed to the next phase of court capacity, which is anticipated to be June 3, 2021 at the earliest. Phase 2 will remain in effect until Newaygo County can meet the gaing criteria after collaborating with the health department for Phase 3.

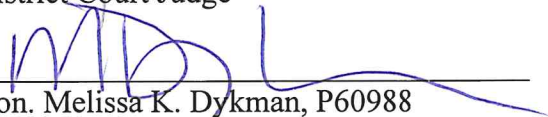
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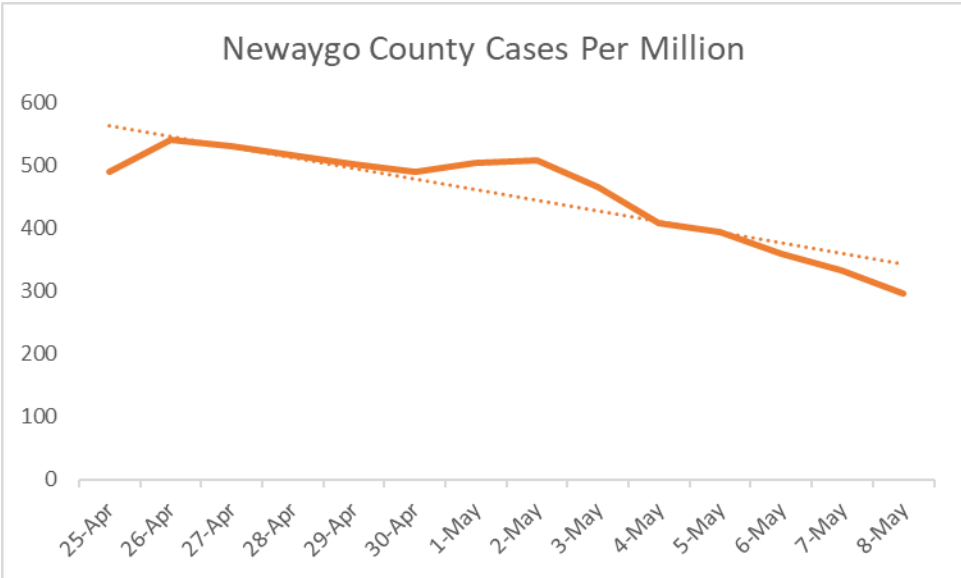
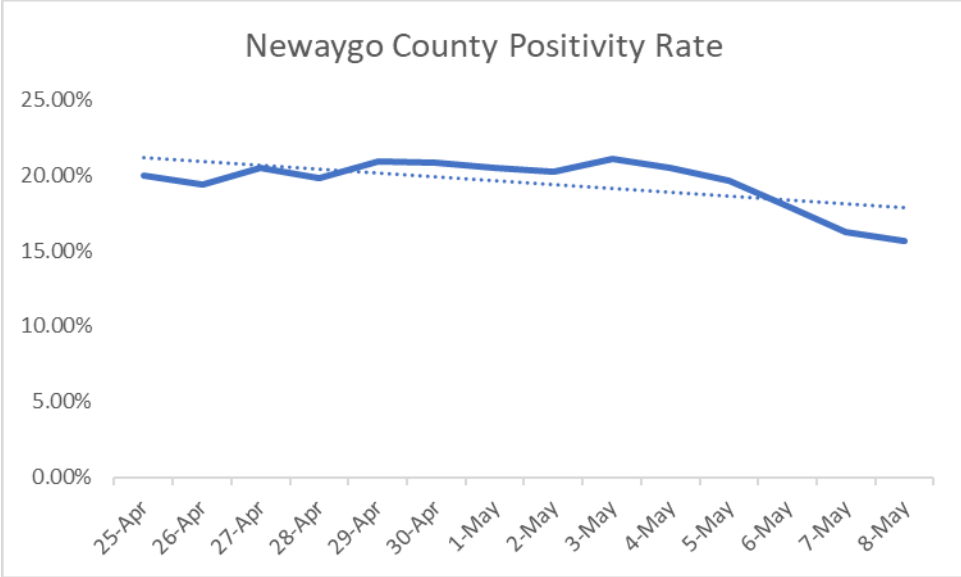
  
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Hon. Robert D. Springstead, P48639  
Chief Judge/Circuit Court Judge

Date: 5-24-21

  
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Hon. K. Kevin Drake, P31607  
District Court Judge

Date: 5/24/21

  
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Hon. Melissa K. Dykman, P60988  
Probate Court Judge





**From Michigan Supreme Court September 25th, Memorandum:**

7 day average in the county of less than 70 COVID-19 cases per million per day  
**AND** Less than 10 percent positive diagnostic tests

**OR**

Fewer than 20 cases per day in the county over the past 7 days (If a county has a daily 7 day average of fewer than 20 cases, the criteria of 70 cases per million or less may not apply, depending on county population)

County Risk Level

% Initiated Vaccination

**Newaygo**

296.7  
15.60%

**Data from MI Safe Start as of Saturday, May 8th**

14.2

**Data from MI COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard**

E. Highest

41.50%