

**NEWTON COUNTY JUVENILE COURT**  
**IN-PERSON COURT HEARING GUIDELINES**

A. Screening:

1. Prior to attending an in-person court hearing, individuals shall be screened by Sheriff's Office personnel and/or Juvenile Court personnel and will be denied entry if they have a temperature of 100.4° F or higher or their response to questioning indicates COVID-19 symptoms or exposure. If an individual denied entry due to screening requirements is a party or essential participant in a scheduled court hearing, arrangements may be made to allow the individual denied entry to participate by video conference or said hearing will be continued until such time as that individual can be in attendance.
2. Inmates being transported from an adult facility or youth who are being transported from an RYDC to the Judicial Center shall be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperature taken prior to transport. Inmates or youth with symptoms or a temperature equal to or above 100.4° F will not be transported to the Judicial Center.

B. Face coverings or masks:

1. All individuals over two (2) years of age attending an in-person court hearing will be required to wear a face covering or mask covering their mouth and nose and keep it properly affixed at all times.
2. Individuals are encouraged to bring face coverings or masks with them, but if the individual does not provide their own face covering or mask, one will be provided from court supplies.

C. Social distancing and occupancy limitations:

1. All persons not from the same household are required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.
2. Court personnel shall mark and/or identify safe and appropriate waiting and seating locations to allow individuals to comply with rules for social distancing.
3. Due to social distancing requirements, the maximum number of persons permitted in waiting rooms and areas, conference rooms, offices and the courtroom will be limited, and all individuals shall comply with stated limitations. During in person court hearings, it may be necessary to limit the persons admitted to the courtroom to parties, attorneys, directly involved agency representatives, and court staff. In the courtroom, seating shall be arranged in such a way there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each seat for persons not residing in the same household. If persons are excluded from the courtroom for social distancing purposes, the court shall make alternate arrangements for proceedings to be observed by video conference link.

D. Hygiene and cleaning procedures:

1. Hand sanitizer shall be placed at the entrance to the Judicial Center, in the Juvenile Court waiting room and in the courtroom. All individuals shall use hand sanitizer (or wash their hands) upon entrance to the Judicial Center, upon entrance to the Juvenile Court offices, and upon entrance to the courtroom.
2. Court and county personnel shall sanitize frequently touched surfaces and waiting areas with sanitizing wipes and/or spray at least twice during the day and at the end of each day. Sanitizing will occur more often, if needed, when court is in session.
3. Court and county personnel shall sanitize court seating and surfaces with sanitizing wipes and/or spray between court hearings and at the end of day when court is in session.

E. Notices of In-Person Hearings:

1. The Clerks shall include the following information on all notices from the Court:
  - a. Notification that parties should limit the number of people they bring with them to hearings to the extent possible.
  - b. Notification of screening requirements in effect and to allow additional time for compliance with screening requirements.
  - c. Notification a face covering or mask will be required to be worn and requesting individuals bring their own face covering or mask or one will be provided for them.
  - d. Notification to parties requiring interpreters to notify the Court of this requirement at least one week in advance of a scheduled proceeding, if possible.
  - e. Notification to individuals who are “vulnerable persons” (as defined herein) of the ability to contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations, such as the ability to participate in a hearing by video conference or to request a continuance. A notice with this information shall also be posted in a conspicuous location at the juvenile court offices.
  - f. Notification to individuals who are not “vulnerable individuals” that the Court will consider other requests for accommodations on a case-by-case basis from those who, although not included in the definition of vulnerable person, live with or care for a vulnerable person, have child care limitations, or have other concerns making it difficult for them to appear before the Court in person or that require access to personal protective equipment.
2. The following individuals are considered to be “vulnerable persons”: (a) individuals who are 65 years of age or older; (b) individuals who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility; (c) individuals who have chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, or severe heart disease; (d) individuals who are immunocompromised; (e) individuals with class III or severe obesity; and (f) individuals diagnosed with the following underlying medical conditions: diabetes, liver disease, and chronic kidney disease (undergoing dialysis).