

HEALTH GUIDELINES GOVERNING ACCESS TO ALL THE COURTS OF JAMAICA

In light of the COVID – 19 pandemic that has affected and continues to affect Jamaica, guidelines are being implemented to minimize the risk of spreading the COVID – 19 virus and enhance the health and safety of all court users, staff and judges in Jamaica. We ask for your cooperation in this time of crisis. These guidelines are to continue indefinitely and are subject to review.

ACCESS TO COURTS

1. While recognizing the fundamental principle of open justice, and in seeking to give effect to this principle in the context of the COVID – 19 pandemic, it has become necessary to restrict access to all court buildings to necessary persons until further notice. “Necessary persons” are defined in paragraph 12 below.
2. All persons entering any court building will be required to:
 - a. wear face covering which covers nose and mouth;
 - b. submit to temperature checks by use of a handheld thermometer;
 - c. sanitize hands using the alcohol-based solvent provided at the entrance to each court building.
3. Any person who does not comply with paragraph 2 will be denied entry to the court building.
4. Any person displaying flu-like symptoms or whose temperature exceeds (98.6 ° (F); 37° (C)) will be denied entry to the court building.
5. Any person who, while on the court building, exhibits flu-like symptoms or whose temperature exceeds what is considered normal temperature will be required to leave the court building immediately.
6. All Court users must at all times seek to maintain a minimum distance of six feet between themselves and any other person in their immediate vicinity. This is applicable to both persons waiting to gain entry to the Courts and to persons who have been granted entry.

7. All persons who are permitted to enter the court building are being encouraged to wash their hands frequently with soap and water at the most appropriate facility provided in the court building.
8. Where handwashing facilities are unavailable for any reason persons are encouraged to use hand sanitization facilities that are available.
9. Efforts will be made as far as possible, given the resource limitations, the need to preserve security and, the rules relating to privacy of certain matters, to facilitate public access to proceedings in open court by virtual technology.
10. Media personnel who wish to access the building for the purpose of reporting on proceedings in court must apply in writing to the Office of the Chief Justice for accreditation and permission to attend court at least five days before the date he or she wishes to attend the particular court.
11. Litigants, and witnesses attending court, are encouraged to take with them documentation indicating the name and reference of the case or matter in which they are involved as well as some form of identification. This will expedite processing as persons enter the court building.

DEFINITION

12. "Necessary persons" means judges, office attendants, court staff, police officers, probation officers, attorneys-at-law, public prosecutors, litigants, accused persons, witnesses, staff of the Court Administration Division, persons accompanying (a) children, (b) vulnerable witnesses, or (c) persons needing special assistance.

DATED 27TH DAY OF MAY 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Sykes', is written over a horizontal line.

BRYAN SYKES OJ, CD

CHIEF JUSTICE OF JAMAICA