



Yakima County
District Court &
Probation Services

COVID 19 SAFETY PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

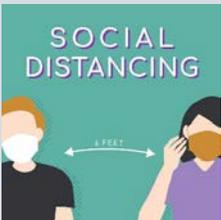
Yakima County District Court works with the Yakima County Health District as well as other local leaders to ensure the health and well-being of court employees, litigants, attorneys, and the public while performing our constitutional and statutory duties.

This document addresses how social distancing and other public health measures are being implemented in the Court to minimize the risk of exposure and spread of the COVID 19 virus. While we are not able to eliminate the risk of the virus, the Court is committed to minimizing the risk by implementing recommended practices by health officials and local leaders, evaluating and modifying our practices and educating the staff, court users and the public. This plan will be reviewed regularly as lessons are learned and more information is obtained from the Yakima County Health District and other sources.

Court Representatives are in contact with the Yakima County Health District. The Court will strive, to the extent possible to adhere to guidelines in making further modifications which take into consideration:

- ❖ COVID-19 disease activity (number and trends in COVID-19 cases and mortality);
- ❖ Health care system readiness (hospital capacity, number of ventilators and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)availability);
- ❖ Testing capacity and availability (geographic distribution of testing, laboratory capacity, test kit availability, and number of tests performed per day);
- ❖ Case investigation and contact tracing (staffing availability, case management plans; rate of case investigations, availability of Isolation and/or quarantine facilities);
- ❖ Ability to protect high-risk populations (number of outbreaks in congregate settings; demographic data to identify and monitor high-risk populations); and
- ❖ The Court's responsibility to perform constitutional and statutory duties.

Social Distancing



Courtrooms:

- ❖ Each courtroom has floor markings where people can safely sit, 6-feet from others in the same space.
- ❖ ~~Each-The capacity of each~~ courtroom session will be limited ~~to no more than 10 participants per session-to minimize the risk of exposure/transmission of the virus.~~
- ❖ Every court participant will be required to wear a face ~~covering if not fully vaccinated.~~ If you do not have a face covering, a -mask will be offered to you when you arrive in the courtroom. Face shields are available for those who cannot wear a face covering.
- ❖ ~~Each session of court will have~~We have implemented a staggered start time ~~approach for many dockets s~~ to limit congestion in the hallways and courtrooms.
- ❖ The clerk stations have had a barrier installed to protect the court staff as well as the court participants from exposure.
- ❖ Court staff ~~who are not full vaccinated~~-will be wearing a mask while in the courtroom.

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Court Calendars:

Court calendars are available on the Yakima County District Court website: [District Court Calendars](#). They are also visible on the 2nd floor of the courthouse, either via the calendar monitors near the main elevators or on a printed calendar near the secondary elevator on the eastside of the courthouse.

The Court will continue to offer hearings via Zoom for those court users who wish to appear remotely. This option is available for most court hearings. If you have an attorney and wish to appear remotely contact your attorney who can advise you if your case is one that can be addressed via Zoom. For those who do not have an attorney, you can access the form on the Yakima County District Court website or by clicking this link: [Virtual Hearing Form \(Motion to Calendar – Virtual Hearing\)](#) and email it to the DCCalendarDesk@co.yakima.wa.us. The Judge will review the request and determine if your case can be addressed via Zoom.

~~Many court calendars will be have staggered in start times to ensure proper social distancing and minimize congestion.~~ If the court participant appears with family members they may sit together in the courtroom. However, we are limiting the number of court users who can occupy space in the courtroom. ~~to 10 people.~~ Generally scheduling of cases will be done at a rate of 10 per hour, however that limit is subject to modification. Please check your court notice for the specific time of your court hearing.

~~To ensure adequate social distancing, the requirement that court participants sign for documents reviewed during court is waived. The Judge will review the documents in court on the record and indicate as such on the document. The court participant will receive a copy of the document before leaving court if appearing in person or by preferred delivery mode (i.e. email, mail etc.) in the case of a remote appearance.~~



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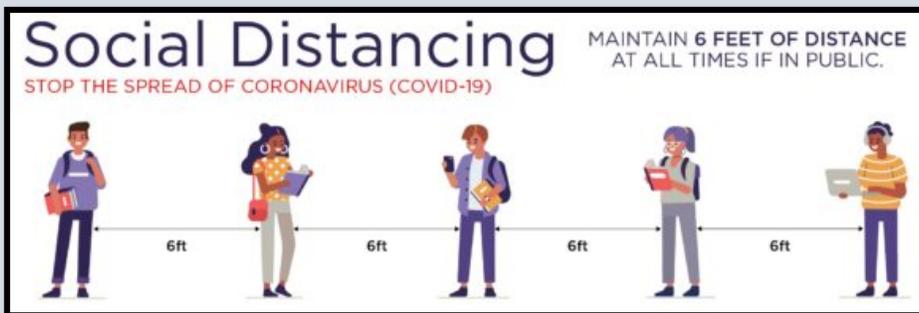


Clerk's Office and Probation:

- ❖ Staff are ~~still~~ working at all Court locations. You can access staff in person, phone or via a contact us link our website.
 - District Court: <https://www.yakimacounty.us/District-Court>
 - Probation Services: <https://www.yakimacounty.us/District-Court-Probation>
- ❖ Staff in all court locations are practicing social distancing and wearing face covering. ~~if they are no fully vaccinated.~~ If you are coming to one of our locations, please come prepared with the appropriate face covering. ~~if you are not fully vaccinated.~~
- ❖ All customer service windows have been modified with additional protective barriers to limit exposure and transmission of the virus.
- ❖ Social distancing decals have been affixed to the floors to indicate where you can stand and maintain a safe social distance.
- ❖ Signage in English and Spanish is present throughout the court spaces to remind court users, staff and the public of the need to be vigilant in following protective measures against the virus.

Probation Services:

- ❖ Probation Officers have been conducting probation appointments remotely, either via phone or Zoom. As the vaccine has rolled out, and the recommended response to COVID 19 has changed, we are moving more toward in-person appointments. Probationers should discuss with their probation officer the expectations regarding appointments. ~~If a Probationer is not fully vaccinated and is who are~~ meeting in person with their probation officer, ~~they~~ must wear a face covering.
- ❖ ~~As an option, in those instances where an in-person appointment is necessary,~~ work stations have been set up in a large training room. ~~The work stations that~~ consist of plexiglass barriers between the Probation Officer and the ~~client/probationer~~. ~~Both are required to wear a face covering during the appointment.~~
- ❖ ~~Each work station has been measured to ensure at least a six-foot separation between work stations.~~
- ❖ To afford greater protection, whenever possible windows will be opened in the space to further enhance air flow.
- ❖ Air purifiers will be available in probation spaces to further enhance air filtration.



Probation Services Programs:

- ❖ Traffic Safety Programs have now all been made available online. To make accommodation for those who are not able to participate online, Probation Services will hold classes as the need arises.
- ❖ Cost Recovery Class will also be offered, but only in an in-person setting.
- ❖ Classes will be scheduled in the training room in Probation Services. The class size will be limited ~~to no more than 7 participants~~ to accommodate social distancing.
- ❖ For in-person classes, all participants and the instructor will be required to wear a face covering. ~~if not fully vaccinated~~. If you do not have one, a mask will be made available. If the participant is not able to wear a mask, a face shield will be made available.
- ❖ To afford greater protection, whenever possible windows will be opened in the space to further enhance air flow.

Cleaning, Sanitation and Air Ventilation

Courtrooms:

- ❖ Hand sanitizer is available at the entrance of each courtroom, on the tables in the courtroom and at the clerk station.
- ❖ Each night, staff from facilities services, thoroughly clean each courtroom with hospital grade disinfectant.
- ❖ All of county buildings are air dilution systems, diluting up to 60% of fresh air with 10 – 12 air changes per hour, which exceeds the mandatory 6 air changes per hour. Additionally, county buildings are equipped with 4” pleated media filters that filter the air both coming in and going out of all the buildings.



Courthouse Common Spaces, Clerk’s and Probation Offices:

- ❖ Hand sanitizer is available throughout the courthouse, near stair wells, outside of courtrooms and at clerks and probation windows.
- ❖ Signage in English and Spanish is present throughout the court spaces to remind court users, staff and the public of the need to be vigilant in washing hands and other protective measures against the virus.
- ❖ Each night facility staff clean the courthouse thoroughly.
- ❖ All of county buildings have air dilution systems, diluting up to 60% of fresh air with 10 – 12 air changes per hour, which exceeds the mandatory 6 air changes per hour. Additionally, county buildings are equipped with 4” pleated media filters that filter the air both coming in and going out of all the buildings.
- ❖ Grandview location has increase the air ventilation processes and improved filters in the system.
- ❖ Air purifiers will be available for court spaces as needed to further enhance air filtration.

Jury Trials

Pursuant to Supreme Court Order 25700-B-631, jury trials may resume effective July 6, 2020. However, due to the rate of infection of the virus and the current conditions in our community, it was determined that it is not safe to resume jury trials at that time. In addition to cases filed by the State through the prosecutor’s office, the Court provides court services for the cities of

Union Gap, Mabton, Tieton, Moxee and Grandview. As of October 14, 2020, the Court is now prepared to move forward with jury trials in both court locations in Yakima and Grandview. In anticipation of resuming jury trials, the Court consulted with the Yakima County Health Department and were provided with some recommendations for safely resuming jury trials that we have implemented.

Jury Pooling Area:

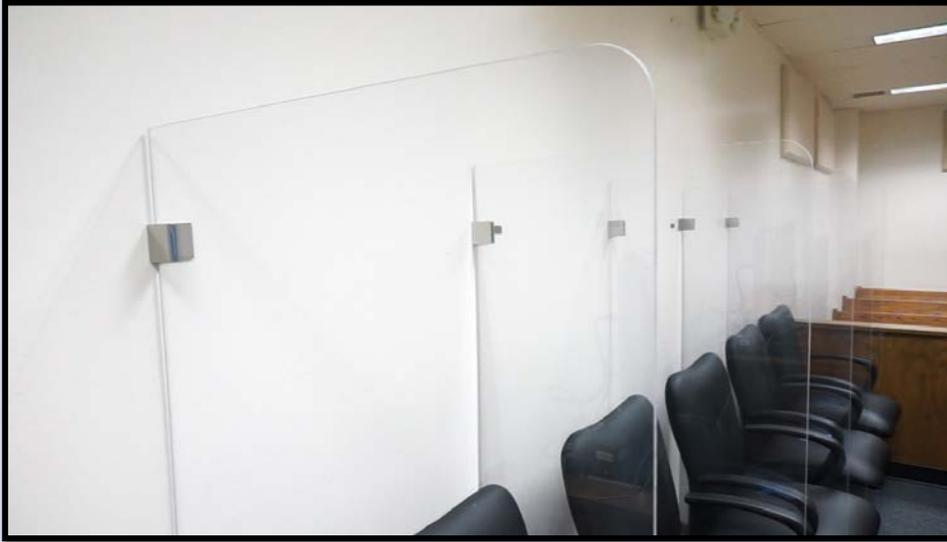
All jurors called to serve on a trial will be directed to a specific location that we refer to as the jury pooling area. In Yakima we have secured a large space in the basement of the county courthouse. And in Grandview we are using the existing courtroom. In both spaces we have instituted the following safeguards:

- ❖ Prior to the juror's arrival, the chairs and space have been cleaned thoroughly.
- ❖ Hand sanitizer is available upon entering the rooms.
- ❖ Easy access to bathroom facilities.
- ❖ Signage in English and Spanish is present throughout the court spaces to remind court users, staff and the public of the need to be vigilant in washing hands and other protective measures against the virus.
- ❖ All of county buildings have air dilution systems, diluting up to 60% of fresh air with 10 – 12 air changes per hour, which exceeds the mandatory 6 air changes per hour. Additionally, county buildings are equipped with 4" pleated media filters that filter the air both coming in and going out of all the buildings.
- ❖ Grandview location has increased the air ventilation processes and improved filters in the system.
- ❖ Air purifiers will be available for court spaces as needed to further enhance air filtration.
- ❖ Masks or face shields will be required of all jurors upon entering the jury pooling areas, ~~who are not fully vaccinated.~~
- ❖ District Court staff check-in process which includes the taking of temperatures of all jurors ~~and screening for potential COVID exposure or symptoms.~~
- ❖ Bottled water will be made available for jurors.

~~Jury Selection Process:~~

~~For trials being conducted in Yakima, we will use two courtrooms for the selection of jurors. Each courtroom will seat 12 potential jurors socially distanced. For Grandview, the courtroom is sufficiently large enough to accommodate the entire jury panel socially distanced. In both spaces we have instituted the following safeguards:~~

- ~~❖ The entire courtroom spaces are cleaned thoroughly.~~
- ~~❖ Hand sanitizer is available upon entering the courtrooms.~~
- ~~❖ All of county buildings have air dilution systems, diluting up to 60% of fresh air with 10 – 12 air changes per hour, which exceeds the mandatory 6 air changes per hour. Additionally, county buildings are equipped with 4" pleated media filters that filter the air both coming in and going out of all the buildings.~~
- ~~❖ Grandview location has increased the air ventilation processes and improved filters in the system.~~
- ~~❖ Air purifiers will be operating in each courtroom to further enhance air filtration.~~
- ~~❖ Masks or face shields will be required of all jurors. Court staff and litigants who are not fully vaccinated.~~



Jury Trials: ~~In Yakima, we have designated District Court Courtroom #2 as the jury trial courtroom. In that space we have instituted the following safeguards~~We have instituted the following safeguards while conducting jury trials:

- ❖ ~~The jury box has been equipped with Lexan partitions between the jury chairs.~~
- ❖ The litigant's tables and chairs have been re-positioned to allow for sufficient social distancing between the litigants and the jury box.
- ❖ Additional plexiglass barriers have been installed between the clerk's station and the witness stand.
- ❖ Hand sanitizer, tissues, water, paper pad and pen will be provided to each juror selected for the trial.
- ❖ All of county buildings have air dilution systems, diluting up to 60% of fresh air with 10 – 12 air changes per hour, which exceeds the mandatory 6 air changes per hour. Additionally, county buildings are equipped with 4" pleated media filters that filter the air both coming in and going out of all the buildings.
- ❖ Air purifiers will be operating in each courtroom to further enhance air filtration.
- ❖ Masks or face shields will be required of all jurors, court staff and litigants, ~~who are not fully vaccinated~~

In Grandview, we have one courtroom. In that space we have instituted the following safeguards:

- ❖ The chairs in the jury box have been re-positioned to allow for sufficient social distancing between the jurors.
- ❖ The litigant's tables and chairs have been re-positioned to allow for sufficient social distancing between the litigants and the jury box.
- ❖ Hand sanitizer, tissues, water, paper pad and pen will be provided to each juror selected for the trial.
- ❖ Grandview location has increased the air ventilation processes and improved filters in the system.
- ❖ Air purifiers will be operating in each courtroom to further enhance air filtration.
- ❖ Masks or face shields will be required of all jurors, court staff and litigants, ~~who are not fully vaccinated~~

Jury Deliberations: In Yakima, we have designated District Court Courtroom #4 as jury break area and deliberation space. In that space we have instituted the following safeguards:

- ❖ The entire space is cleaned before use by jurors.
- ❖ The space has been marked to identify location that are sufficiently socially distanced.
- ❖ All of county buildings have air dilution systems, diluting up to 60% of fresh air with 10 – 12 air changes per hour, which exceeds the mandatory 6 air changes per hour. Additionally, county buildings are equipped with 4" pleated media filters that filter the air both coming in and going out of all the buildings.
- ❖ Air purifiers will be operating to further enhance air filtration.
- ❖ During the deliberation and on breaks, masks or face shields will be required of all jurors, ~~who are not fully vaccinated~~
- ❖ Bathrooms will be readily accessible and specifically designated for juror use only.
- ❖ Bottled water will be available for jurors.

In Grandview, we will be using the existing jury deliberation space for the deliberation process and breaks. In that space we have instituted the following safeguards:

- ❖ The entire space is cleaned before use by jurors.
- ❖ Tables and chairs have been re-positioned to allow for sufficient social distancing.
- ❖ Grandview location has increased the air ventilation processes and improved filters in the system.
- ❖ Air purifiers will be operating to further enhance air filtration.
- ❖ During the deliberation and on breaks, masks or face shields will be required of all jurors, ~~who are not fully vaccinated.~~
- ❖ Bathrooms will be readily accessible and specifically designated for juror use only.
- ❖ Bottled water will be available for jurors.