

IN THE GENERAL SESSIONS COURT FOR KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE

GENERAL ORDER REGARDING UPDATED OPERATIONS UNDER ADM2020-00428

WHEREAS, on February 12, 2021, the Tennessee Supreme Court issued ADM2020-00428 [02/12/2021] lifting the suspension of in-person proceedings commencing March 15, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the previous Sessions Court Order dated May 7, 2020, constituting directives to minimize in-person proceedings remains in effect as to sections 1 - 6; and

WHEREAS, the previous Sessions Court reopening plan dated May 5, 2020, mandating safety measures related to docket size and safe social distancing procedures has been approved and remains in effect; and

WHEREAS, ADM2020-00428 [03-13-2020, *et. seq.*] encourages the use of technology wherever possible and given that Knox County Sessions Div I-III Courtrooms have remote technology through TEAMS, whenever possible any Defense Attorney who can appear with their clients remotely on non-Preliminary Hearing dates is encouraged to do so. Most Assistant District Attorneys will continue to appear in court by TEAMS. Attached is the Operations for TEAMS access to each courtroom; and

WHEREAS, the Order of the Tennessee Supreme Court requires that the Knox County Sessions Courts utilize available technology to minimize in-person appearances while still functioning efficiently and in compliance with federal and state constitutional rights;

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED AND DECREED:

1. The Remote Jail Docket will continue at present for all incarcerated Defendants with cases NOT set for preliminary hearings. The Remote Jail Docket will be heard via TEAMS in the Div II DUI Courtroom. That docket will begin at 8:30am, with KCJ (Knox County Jail) cases taking priority. All attorneys shall appear promptly by TEAMS or in person. In the event the DUI Court is closed, the Remote Jail Docket will move to the Div I Misdemeanor Courtroom TEAM. If both of those courtrooms are closed the Remote Jail Docket will move to the Div III Felony Courtroom TEAM. The purpose for this procedure is to ensure Video Court will be in session every day excluding holidays, thus avoiding docket backlogs and promoting court access for incarcerated Defendants.
2. In-person Court appearances in Sessions Courtrooms Division I-IV will commence March 15, 2021. Incarcerated Defendants set for Preliminary Hearings or with agreed in-person proceedings, such as Bond Source hearings or necessitating an interpreter, will be docketed in person as before in the Misdemeanor, DUI or Felony Courtrooms. Those dockets will start at 8:30am in an effort to avoid a crowded lobby area. However, as

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directed on Subpoenas, witnesses are not required to be in court before 9:00am. Bonded Defendants should appear remotely when practicable or otherwise in-person.

3. Remote announcements and plea agreements via TEAMS are encouraged whenever practicable.

To facilitate such remote announcements and plea agreements, once an agreement has been reached, and at least TWO (2) days before a scheduled court appearance, Defense Counsel shall copy the ADA and email the Knox County Criminal Division Sessions Court Clerk at sessions.court@knoxcounty.org to provide notice that there is a case for video plea/disposition with the date and court of submission.

Said email notice shall include all completed forms relevant to the instant matter. The following information must be included in the email notice to the Clerk: Defendant's name, IDN, case numbers, current court date, agreed plea date, all specifics of the plea deal, and all the warrants to which the Defendant will plead, including executed paperwork.

Forms are available for download at:

https://knoxcounty.org/criminalcourt/general_sessions/index.php or
<https://knoxcounty.org/gsjudges/index.php>

The Clerk will file the signed forms with the subject warrants to send into the Courtroom for remote plea submission.

On the scheduled date of the plea the Defendant and Attorney will follow the attached TEAMS Operations to appear in the docketed Courtroom.

Per Curiam

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GENERAL SESSIONS COURT
CLERK OF COURT DIVISION
KNOXVILLE, TN

IN THE GENERAL SESSIONS COURT FOR KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Instructions for access, operations, and changing between General Sessions Video TEAMS platforms.
[Current 03-11-2021]

ACCESS

1. Send a written request to Esther Roberts esther.roberts@knoxcounty.org to be added to the TEAM. (If you were in the Div III TEAM, you have been automatically added to the Div I and Div II TEAMS).
2. Receive written confirmation you have been added to the three General Sessions TEAMS. (This step is to ensure each email is correctly entered into the GS TEAMS.)
3. Make sure you have the TEAMS app installed in your device. Note: you can access TEAMS from a stationary computer, laptop, pad device, or phone. Also, upon installing the TEAMS app, restarting your device will help ensure smooth operations.

OPERATIONS

4. Open the TEAMS App.
5. Click on the TEAMS icon on the left side bar.
6. Under the list of TEAMS, select the General Sessions TEAM you need: DivI (Division I/Misdemeanor), DivII (Division II/DUI), DivIII (Division II/Felony).
7. Click on the small purple "movie camera" icon just to the right of the TEAM name –OR–click on the TEAM LINK provided in the chat comments each day.
8. On the pop-up entry screen, make sure your camera and microphone are TURNED OFF.
9. Click "Join now" and join the TEAM.
10. As appropriate, turn your camera "on" and unmute your microphone to conduct business with the Court.
11. When your business is complete, click "Leave" on the upper right-hand red box and close out the TEAMS app.

CHANGING BETWEEN GENERAL SESSIONS TEAMS

12. To change between GS TEAMS, first click "Leave" on the upper right-hand red box to leave the current TEAM.
13. Back under the list of TEAMS, select the General Sessions TEAM you need: DivI, DivII, or DivIII.
14. Click on the small purple "movie camera" icon just to the right of the TEAM name –OR–click on the TEAM LINK provided in the chat comments each day.
15. On the pop-up entry screen, make sure your camera and microphone are TURNED OFF.
16. Click "Join now" and join the TEAM.
17. As appropriate, turn your camera "on" and unmute your microphone to conduct business with the Court.
18. When your business is complete, click "Leave" on the upper right-hand red box and close out the TEAMS app.

Basic troubleshooting: oftentimes, restarting your device will clear up any connectivity or audio/video performance issues.

For any unresolved issues, please contact Esther Roberts at 865.215.2146 or 865.607.9780.