

Massachusetts Appeals Court

COVID-19 FAQs

Updated July 10, 2020

Is the Appeals Court conducting business during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes, the Appeals Court is open for business, but is conducting most business virtually (i.e., by electronic filing, telephone, email, videoconference, or comparable means).

Is the John Adams Courthouse open to the public?

Beginning on July 13, 2020, the John Adams Courthouse, the home of the Appeals Court, will be open to attorneys, litigants, and other members of the public attending in-person court proceedings; conducting in-person business with a clerk's office; or conducting business at other offices that are open to the public and housed in the courthouse.

Members of the public entering the John Adams Courthouse may be subject to screening procedures.

Is the Clerk's Office accepting filings?

Yes, the Clerk's Office is performing all case-processing functions and court personnel are available during business hours to provide assistance by telephone, email, electronic filing, regular mail, and in person. Business hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. During the pandemic the Appeals Court continues to conduct most business virtually (i.e., by telephone, email, electronic filing, etc.) to the extent possible to safeguard public health and safety by limiting the need for persons to enter the courthouse. All documents in all cases may be electronically filed at eFileMA.com and are required by [M.A.C. Rule 13.0](#) to be electronically filed in many instances.

For information on filing documents electronically with the Appeals Court, see our [electronic filing guidance page](#) and Appeals Court [Rule 13.0](#).

Filings not required or able to be electronically filed may be made by first-class mail or its equivalent addressed to:

Appeals Court Clerk's Office
John Adams Courthouse
One Pemberton Square, Room 1200
Boston, MA 02108

In addition, for paper filings the Appeals Court has established a drop-box at the entryway of the John Adams Courthouse for the benefit of those persons who wish to hand-deliver documents for filing. The drop-box will be monitored regularly by court personnel and filings processed in accordance with the Court's ordinary procedures. Due to increased risk of COVID-19 transmission, this option is discouraged unless other filing options are not possible.

What do I do if I have an emergency matter?

A person with an emergency matter that must be reviewed immediately should contact the Clerk's Office by telephone at 617-921-4443 to alert the Appeals Court that their emergency matter has been electronically filed, emailed, or placed in the courthouse drop-box, or to seek guidance on how to file it.

Is the Appeals Court continuing to hear oral arguments?

Yes, the Appeals Court is hearing oral arguments in panel and single justice cases. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Appeals Court will continue to utilize a videoconference program, such as Zoom, for any oral arguments unless in-person arguments are specifically ordered in a case. Oral arguments are streamed live to the Appeals Court's [YouTube channel](#) and may be viewed by members of the public. Audio recordings are posted within 24 hours to the court's docket website (<https://www.ma-appellatecourts.org>).

How do I determine the due date for my brief or other filing?

Please see Appeals Court [Administrative Order 20-2](#) and the court's [online docket](#).

Where do I learn information about my petition that the single justice of the Supreme Judicial Court has transferred to the Appeals Court single justice?

Please see Appeals Court [Administrative Order 20-3](#) and the court's [online docket](#).

How May I Contact the Pro Bono Civil Appeals Clinic?

The Civil Appeals Clinic, which now operates online only, is run by the Volunteer Lawyers Project and staffed by volunteer attorneys. It is limited to low-income persons who qualify for services. No in-person meetings will occur at the John Adams Courthouse. For information about the screening process, please contact the Eastern Region Legal Intake (ERLI) Helpline at 617-603-1700 or complete an online intake [[here](#)].

Where can I get answers to my questions?

Appeals Court. The Appeals Court provides multiple sources to answer questions from attorneys, litigants, and the general public. For answers to most questions, please consult: the Appeals Court's website (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/appeals-court>) for general procedural information, educational pages, and links to legal resources, and the Appellate Courts' website (ma-appellatecourts.org) for information about pending cases and argument/hearing schedules.

Clerk's Office personnel may be contacted during business hours at 617-921-4443, or at MacClerkMatter@Jud.State.Ma.Us. Please include a detailed message, any relevant docket numbers, and your contact information.

Supreme Judicial Court. For information about matters in the Supreme Judicial Court for the Commonwealth, or the single justice session of the Supreme Judicial Court for the County of Suffolk, see the Supreme Judicial Court [FAQ](#) page, or call 617-557-1020 for the Supreme Judicial Court for the Commonwealth, or 617-557-1100 for the Supreme Judicial Court for the County of Suffolk.

Trial Court. For information concerning the Trial Court, please see this [page](#) or call 833-91COURT (912-6878).

Unemployment Benefits. If you have a question about your unemployment benefits, please call (617) 626-5200 or see <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/appeal-your-unemployment-benefits-decision>. Please note that the Massachusetts Appeals Court does not have direct appellate jurisdiction over decisions of the Department of Unemployment Assistance.