

Land Court FAQs on Emergency Measures in Response to COVID-19

Frequently asked questions about the Land Court's emergency measures in response to coronavirus (COVID-19). Last updated July 2, 2020.

Is the Land Court Recorder's Office open for business?

Yes, the Recorder's Office is open for business however, the courthouse is not open for in-person public access until July 13, 2020. Starting on July 13th, the Recorder's Office in the Suffolk County Courthouse will reopen to in-person public access for certain limited purposes, which are described below.

Are the Land Court's offices in the Suffolk County Courthouse open to in-person access by the public?

Until July 13, 2020, the courthouse is not open to in-person public access. Starting July 13, 2020, the Recorder's Office in the Suffolk County Courthouse will reopen to in-person public access for certain limited purposes including emergency business, and also some non-emergency business that cannot be addressed remotely. However, in light of the necessary limitations and conditions on access to the courthouse to protect health and safety, where appropriate, any business with the Recorder's Office should be handled remotely. Where non-emergency business with the Recorder's Office cannot be handled effectively through remote procedures, you may contact the Recorder's Office (Main phone number: (617) 788-7470) and request to schedule an appointment. Drop-in visits to the courthouse should not be made, except where an emergency exists, as building access limitations and security and safety screening will be in place, which could cause significant delays.

Where non-emergency business with the Title Examination Department cannot be handled effectively through remote procedures, you may request an appointment accommodation by sending an email to LandCourt.Title@jud.state.ma.us

Where non-emergency business with the Survey Department cannot be handled effectively through remote procedures, you may request an appointment accommodation by sending an email to LandCourt.Survey@jud.state.ma.us

How do I reach someone at the Land Court?

The main phone number for the Land Court is: 617-788-7470. Land Court staff members are working onsite to answer the phone. If you have an emergency matter involving a Land Court case, see below for more specific instructions.

Which matters are considered emergency matters?

Emergency matters are those in which a major risk of permanent and serious harm is about to happen if the court does not act. **Most Land Court cases and matters are not an emergency.**

Some examples of emergency matters in a Land Court case may include:

- Requests for a temporary restraining order (“TRO”)

A judge’s short-term order requiring a person to stop doing or continue doing something that threatens or causes permanent injury to another until a full hearing can be held.

- Urgent Requests for preliminary injunctions (“PI”)

A judge’s order while the case is going on requiring a person to stop doing or continue doing something that threatens or causes permanent injury to another until the rights of the parties are fully determined in the case.

- Urgent Requests for a Judge’s signature on a memorandum or notice of *lis pendens*

When real estate is the subject of litigation, a “memorandum/notice of lis pendens” may be filed with the Register of Deeds in the county where the property is located, warning people that the property is subject to litigation and that they may be bound by the court’s judgment regarding the property.

- Urgent requests for approval of a registered land document by a Land Court Title Examiner
 - Approval requests must follow the procedures established in the [Chief Title Examiner’s Memorandum regarding Interim Procedures for Remote Approvals](#), dated March 25, 2020, or as described in a future updated version of such Memorandum.
 - Urgent requests in a Subsequent to Registration (SBQ) case or Condominium (Condo) case for a court order, endorsement of a voluntary withdrawal, or approval of a condominium deed or amendment related to registered land by a Land Court Title Examiner.
 - Requests must follow the procedures established in the [Chief Title Examiner’s Memorandum regarding Interim Procedures for the Remote Processing of Subsequent Cases & Condominium Documents](#), dated April 10, 2020, or as described in a future updated version of such Memorandum.
 - Urgent requests in a Servicemembers (SM) case to determine the military status of a mortgagor when the case falls within an exception to the moratorium (“freeze”) on mortgage foreclosures enacted by the legislature ([Chapter 65 of the Acts of 2020](#)).
 - Urgent requests in a Tax Lien foreclosure (TL) case.

What do I do if I have an emergency matter? How do I file an emergency matter in the Land Court?

For cases pending in the Land Court with a Judge assigned:

For an emergency matter or request in a case that is already pending in the Land Court and assigned to a Judge or to the Tax Session, email the Sessions Clerk for the Judge to whom your case is assigned, or to the Case Coordinator for the Tax Session, during regular court business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). Your message should include your name, callback number, email address, the case name and docket number (if any), and a message concerning your emergency issue. Staff have remote access to their email and their contact information is listed below.

The staff member will instruct you on next steps, which will include emailing copies of the request and all supporting documents (all filings) to the staff member for the court's review. The staff member may advise you that the Judge or Recorder has ordered that the filings or any responses must be served by email to other parties involved in the case. Only in extraordinary situations, the staff member may schedule an emergency hearing with the court. If so, you will be instructed on how to participate. If the court acts on the emergency request, you will receive the court's order and notice electronically by email.

Note: If you do not receive a response to your initial message to the Sessions Clerk or Case Coordinator after having waited for at least a two-hour period during court business hours (8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.), follow the procedures listed below for new cases that have not yet been filed or assigned to a Judge.

For new cases that have not yet been filed or assigned to a Judge:

For an emergency matter or request in a case that has not yet been filed or a case that has not been assigned to a Judge, call the Land Court's main phone number (617-788-7470). The staff member will take your contact information and message and contact the Sessions Clerk for the Judge assigned to hear emergency matters in unassigned cases for the day. The Judge will then review the emergency request. Their Sessions Clerk will instruct you on next steps, which will include emailing copies of the request and all supporting documents (all filings) to the Sessions Clerk for the Judge's review. Only in extraordinary situations, the Sessions Clerk may schedule an emergency hearing with the Judge. If so, you will be instructed on how to participate. If the Judge takes action on the emergency request, you will receive the Judge's order and notice electronically by email.

A new case will also have to be opened on the Land Court's docketing system, which means that you will have to submit all of the filings required for opening a new case (for example, the signed Complaint and a Civil Action Cover Sheet). You will be instructed to send these documents by email to the Sessions Clerk for immediate processing.

Note: Signed originals of all new case filings, along with a check for the applicable court filing fees, must be sent by mail afterwards. Do not send any irreplaceable original or executed documents to the court until emergency measures have been lifted.

How do I file a matter that is not an emergency matter? What action will the Land Court take?

The Land Court is accepting filings of non-emergency matters in most of our case types, including, for example, title disputes, partitions, land use and zoning, tax lien foreclosures, and subsequent to registration cases ("S-cases"). Only non-emergency cases and matters that have been advanced by a judge, the Recorder, the Deputy Recorder, or the Chief Title Examiner (see below) will be acted on by the court. A description of which case types are being processed and any restrictions can be found on this same site in [Standing Order 7-20](#).

Because a law was passed to stop temporarily most residential foreclosures, processing of routine Servicemembers cases has been suspended and only specified emergency situations will be addressed.

How to File: For cases pending in the Land Court with a Judge assigned:

Counsel and parties may submit electronic copies of non-emergency filings by email to the Sessions Clerk for the Judge to whom your case is assigned, or to the Case Coordinator for the Tax Session. Staff have remote access to their email and their contact information is listed below.

How to File: For new cases that have not yet been filed or assigned to a Judge:

To file a new matter or case that is not an emergency, all of the filings required for opening a new case (for example, the signed Complaint and a Civil Action Cover Sheet) must be sent by mail or delivery to the Land Court Recorder's Office. Onsite staff members will date stamp non-emergency filings as received, and will open the new case on the Land Court's docketing system and enter the filings on the case docket.

What action will the Land Court take on filings in non-emergency matters?

Cases in many of the Land Court's case types may be advanced for appropriate action by the court, even in the absence of any emergency. This includes most Miscellaneous cases types, including title disputes, partitions, land use and zoning, as well as Tax Lien cases and subsequent to registration cases ("S-cases"). The Land Court will advance as many cases as practicable, given the limited staffing and other resources available. If the Judge, Recorder, Deputy Recorder, or Chief Title Examiner determines, in their discretion, that a case or matter should be advanced for remote processing, all lawyers and parties with an active appearance in the case will be notified, and the matter may be scheduled for a remote event (to be conducted by telephone or videoconference) or the court may take other actions or issue further orders. Any party may file a motion to request the court to advance a case or matter upon a showing of good cause.

What do I do if I am unable to reach anyone in the Clerk's office by telephone or if the courthouse is closed?

To reach the court by telephone during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), you should begin by calling the Land Court's main number, (617) 788-7470, and select the option to speak to a staff member on duty. If a staff member does not answer during business hours when the courthouse is open, please try your call again after waiting half an hour, and again select the option to speak to a staff member. It is possible that the staff members working onsite to answer calls are on the line with another caller, or momentarily away from their desks. Alternatively, you may call back on the main number and select the option to leave an emergency voicemail message in the court's emergency voice mail box, or you may send an emergency email or use the Trial Court's call center, see the following.

1. Call the Land Court's main telephone number (617-788-7470) and select the option to leave an emergency voicemail message.
2. Send an email to the Land Court's emergency email address: LandCourt.Emergency@jud.state.ma.us
3. Call the Trial Court's call center (833-91-COURT / 833-912-6878) and select the option to be connected to the Land Court.

Your message should include your name, callback number, email address, the case name and docket number (if any), and a message concerning your emergency issue.

Land Court contact information

Recorder's Office Contact Information

Address	Phone	Online Information
Land Court Recorder's Office 3 Pemberton Square Boston, MA 02108	Main: (617) 788-7470	https://www.mass.gov/orgs/land-court Land Court docket information: https://www.masscourts.org/eservices/

Recorder's Office Contact Information

Judge/Session/Department	Contact information
Chief Justice Piper	Mary Armstrong, Sessions Clerk Mary.Armstrong@jud.state.ma.us
Justice Long	Corey Pontes, Sessions Clerk Corey.Pontes@jud.state.ma.us
Justice Foster	Lia Marino, Sessions Clerk Lia.Marino@jud.state.ma.us

Recorder's Office Contact Information

Judge/Session/Department	Contact information
Justice Speicher	Emily Rosa, Sessions Clerk Emily.Rosa@jud.state.ma.us
Justice Vhay	Jennifer Masello, Sessions Clerk Jennifer.Masello@jud.state.ma.us
Justice Rubin	Jennifer Noonan, Sessions Clerk Jennifer.Noonan@jud.state.ma.us
Justice Roberts	Kathleen Hayes, Sessions Clerk Kathleen.Hayes@jud.state.ma.us
Tax Session	Panoraia Naseli, Case Coordinator Panoraia.Naseli@jud.state.ma.us
Survey Department	Stephen LaMonica, Chief Surveyor LandCourt.Survey@jud.state.ma.us
Title Examination Department	Christina Geaney, Chief Title Examiner LandCourt.Title@jud.state.ma.us