

OPERATIONAL POLICIES DURING ONGOING PANDEMIC

Our top priority is the health of visitors and our staff during the current COVID-19 crisis. In-person access to our office will be limited as we continue to promote the use of electronic communication to assist you. Please be mindful of the CDC guidelines as well as the state's health guidelines as we will be following all operational best practices and safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- **Services**

- Our virtual office is open from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.
- Most services provided by this office can be fulfilled by telephone (410.313.2133), email (HowardCountyROW@registers.maryland.gov), online chat (<http://registers.maryland.gov/main/howard.html>), fax (410.313.3409), mail, drop box delivery, or our online services (www.registers.maryland.gov) and we strongly encourage you to utilize these services.
- Contact us and we will be happy to answer your questions and assist you with the necessary forms.

- **Appointments**

- Because half of our staff will be teleworking each day and to observe social distancing requirements, **we are requiring appointments for all in-person services.**
- If you would like to meet with a staff member in person or you believe your needs cannot be met remotely, please contact our office to schedule an appointment.
 - We will schedule appointments for one-hour timeframes starting at 9:00 AM and the last appointment beginning at 3:00 PM.
 - We will allow only one visitor at a time due to limited space.
 - We will advise what will be required for your situation to serve you more expeditiously.

- **Pleadings**

- **Per orders of the Maryland Judiciary, we can no longer accept filings by e-mail or fax.**
- You must file all pleadings and papers by mail or in person.
- A drop box for our office is located at the entrance to the courthouse if you do not want to enter the building itself.

- **Public Workstation and Research Area**

- Available by appointment only.

- **Security**

- When you arrive at the courthouse, inform the Sheriff's deputies that you have an appointment with the Register of Wills.
- The Sheriff's deputies will ask you a brief questionnaire, require that you wear a facial covering, and use a contactless thermometer to check your temperature. You will then proceed through a metal detector.
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet from other individuals in the building will be enforced.

- **Website**
 - Please visit our website for current updates and for further information including publications, FAQ, Forms, Legal Notices, Estate Search, Claims Search and Invoice Payment.

- **Orphans' Court**
 - The Orphans' Court for Howard County is meeting remotely on a weekly basis to consider matters before it. Remote court proceedings are being scheduled to be conducted using the Zoom meeting platform. As space is severely limited in our courtroom, it is logistically impossible to hold in-person hearings for the foreseeable future.