

## Mid-Atlantic Courts Update: Essential Information for Creditors

Courts across the Mid-Atlantic region have reopened. Despite courts reopening, civil lawsuit filings are down, up to 38% lower in [Virginia](#). Many courts have implemented segmented dockets, increased the availability of remote hearings and installed physical distancing controls to safely resume business as usual procedures. For instance, the Fairfax County General District Court allows litigants and witnesses to appear for certain hearings by phone or Web-Ex. Read more about Fairfax General District Court's [policy](#). Flexible policies, such as the increased availability of remote hearings, allow courts and parties to carry on the essential and efficient functioning of the judicial system. If you have a trial or hearing approaching, you should ask your attorney or the court if you can appear remotely.

One notable exception to the trend of courts reopening is the District of Columbia. Creditors seeking to file consumer debt collection actions are **temporarily prohibited** from filing such claims in D.C. In April 2020, the D.C. City Council passed legislation that prohibits debt collectors and creditors from filing new collection lawsuits or garnishments. D.C. Code § 28-3814(l)(2). Furthermore, creditors may not seek to repossess vehicles or, effectively, to carry out service of process. D.C. Code § 28-3814(l)(2)(C)-(D). These prohibitions will last for the duration of the Mayor's declaration of public health emergency and for 60 days after the public health emergency concludes. For more information, please review the [legislation](#) and the D.C. Attorney General's [guidance](#).

See the latest emergency, COVID-19 related court orders: [VA](#), [NC](#), [MD](#), [DC](#).