

Courthouse Security

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Oakland County will be implementing new security measures that will affect your day-to-day practice at the courthouse. The first thing you will notice upon entering any of our public entrances will be the installation of new turnstiles. Currently, all Oakland County employees entering through the public entrances display their badge to deputy sheriffs to gain access to the building. With the installation of these turnstiles, the employees will now need to swipe their I.D. cards into the turnstile to gain access to the building at these entrances.

The second major change will be the installation of numerous closed-circuit video cameras. These cameras will be located at the ends of all public hallways as well as on the outside of the buildings to cover the perimeter and the parking lots of the courthouse. All told, there will be almost 150 of these cameras located inside and outside of the courthouse, which will be monitored to increase the safety of the staff and public.

Perhaps the largest change for the public and attorneys will be the limited access to many of the staff corridors and to all of the private hallways to judicial chambers. If you are familiar with the current method of access to Judge Hallmark's and Judge Anderson's back corridors, which requires you to be "buzzed in," this will now be the practice for all of our judges' chambers.

The doors to the hallways into the judges' chambers will now be locked. At the end of each hallway there will be a card access reader placed on the exterior of the door as well as video cameras, intercoms and buzzer systems. In order to gain access to Judge Moore's and Judge Grant's chambers, you will need to push the button located outside of the hallway with the corresponding judge's name on it. When the button is pushed, an intercom inside the judge's chamber will buzz, activating a monitoring system that permits judicial staff to speak to you via intercom and see you on the monitor. The judicial employee will be able to "buzz you in," similar to the way it is done in many secured apartments and housing areas.

Little will change with respect to gaining access to Judge Hallmark's chambers, other than you will now be able to push a button directly for her chambers as opposed to Judge Anderson's chambers buzzing people in for both judges.

There will be significant changes with respect to Judge Pezzetti's hallway. Currently, in order to get to Judge Pezzetti's chambers you go through a door from the Juvenile waiting area and walk down the hall to her chambers. The door from the Juvenile waiting area will still be there; however, another door will be installed limiting access down her hallway. The new door will be located immediately adjacent to Referee Twila Leigh's courtroom. As with the other judicial chamber hallways, there will be a video camera, intercom and buzzer system installed at that door. You will need to press the button to buzz into Judge Pezzetti's chambers. This again will activate the intercom and the camera system and a judicial employee will be able to push a button in chambers to allow access back into the corridor.

Finally, there will be several staff corridors that will now be locked. Access to the back hallways in the Juvenile Intake area and Juvenile Casework area as well as the second floor Court Administration and Psychological Clinic will be by swipe card access or through a buzzer system similar to those described above for judicial chambers. Any person wanting to get back into these hallways will need to push the button next to the person's or department's name and request to be "buzzed" in.

The courts continue to struggle with increasing security in our facilities, not only for the benefit of the judicial staff and court employees but for all users of our court. It has been said that security is "inconvenient," but we hope that the ends justify the means here and after a period of adjustment, this will become familiar and bearable for us all.

We look forward to your patience during this time when these new systems are being implemented and certainly would welcome your input if there are continuing problems that we face as we try out these new systems. Stay tuned!