

NEW PRELIMINARY HEARING PROCEDURE

1. Beginning June 12, 2023, preliminary hearings will be divided into 2 Administrative Courtrooms at the beginning of Court. There will be approximately 32 defendants per administrative courtroom. The judge will call through the docket and determine a course of action based on the case status, starting with third or subsequent court dates, then second court dates, and finally, cases in court for the first time.
2. Cases denied a continuance in the administrative courtroom and cases ready for preliminary hearing will be sent to the adjoining hearing room (2G for 2H, 2J for 2K) for hearing.
3. For all preliminary hearings, the parties and counsel (including, without limitation, the Commonwealth and defense in criminal cases) must be ready to be heard at 2:00 p.m. All pre-hearing tasks (including, without limitation, negotiation of plea agreements and recommendations, meeting with clients, interviewing and preparing witnesses, executing agreed orders, and all Rule 7C:5 discovery) shall be completed in advance of the scheduled hearing date.
4. Absent extraordinary circumstances, continuance requests for cases on the docket for the third or subsequent time will be denied; continuance requests for second preliminary hearing dates will only be granted for good cause shown. The agreement of counsel, alone, does not constitute good cause for a continuance. Counsel shall not waive the appearance of any subpoenaed witness without prior approval of the Court. Continuance requests for cases at their initial return will be liberally granted absent extenuating circumstances, for example where the defendant is incarcerated and the defense objects, or cases where witnesses have appeared from another jurisdiction or state and the Commonwealth objects.
5. The parties may continue the practice of filing a motion in advance of a preliminary hearing date on the attorneys' motions docket for entry of an agreed disposition, waiver of a preliminary hearing, continuance requests filed with the Clerk of Court, or motions to nolle prosequi.