

# Securing Pennsylvania's Courts

## What has the judiciary done to make sure Pennsylvania's courts are secure?

The goal of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is to support efforts to ensure the safety of judges, court staff, jurors, witnesses, crime victims and all others who have business in court facilities. Through the work of the Office of Judicial Security of the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), many steps have been taken to enhance security at common pleas and magisterial district courts throughout the Commonwealth. Working with president judges, court administrators, sheriffs, county commissioners and other stakeholder members of local court security committees, these measures include:

- Development of a judicial safety handbook and court security manual outlining recommended security practices, procedures and guidelines for courts.
- Training for staff in magisterial district judge courts in "best practices" to ensure court security and personal safety, and to control and resolve conflicts when they arise inside court facilities.
- Providing video conferencing equipment to magisterial district courts to allow for preliminary arraignments while defendants are held in secure facilities.

Security improvements have also been made in common pleas courts. These include metal detectors, wireless duress alarms, access control devices, X-ray inspection machines and video conferencing systems.

In addition, a statewide incident reporting system has been established. When a security incident occurs in a magisterial district court, it is reported electronically to the staff in the Office of Judicial Security and to the court administrator in the county where it occurs. The same system is operational for common pleas courts. These reports enable AOPC security staff to assist judges and court staff in assessing and responding to threats, assaults and other incidents; to spot trends; and to identify ways to better address safety and security issues.

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