

# Veterans Treatment Court Program Handbook

Montgomery County Tennessee

[www.montgomerycountylvtc.org](http://www.montgomerycountylvtc.org)



## *Mission Statement*

*The Montgomery County Veterans Treatment Court will serve those who willingly sacrificed for our country & find themselves involved in the Criminal Justice System by providing needed treatment & services under judicial supervision in order to restore the veteran to their honored status within our community.*

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Montgomery County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC). This handbook will provide you with a description of what is expected of you as a VTC participant. This program handbook is a guide to understanding the requirements of participating in the VTC program; specific questions should be directed toward the VTC Staff or Treatment Team. Participants are encouraged to share this handbook with family and friends. Although the program requirements may seem overwhelming at first, once a routine is established, most do very well and see tremendous benefits in their lives.

Four simple rules will ensure success:

1. **Be Honest** – Lying may be considered a sanctionable offense!
2. **Show Up** – Be present and on time to all scheduled appearances.
3. **Work Hard** – We will work hard for your success, but expect you to meet us half-way – we will not work harder for you than you work for yourself.
4. **Communicate** – Maintain open communication with Case Management/VTC Team and your mentor. Read all e-mails from VTC thoroughly.

The Veterans Treatment Court program is designed to help you live in your community as a productive & responsible citizen. The Judge, & the VTC Team will guide & assist you, but the final responsibility is yours.

**You must be committed to a better life.**

# **VETERANS TREATMENT COURT DESCRIPTION**

The Montgomery County Veterans Treatment Court is a voluntary program that includes regular court appearances before the Judge. Treatment includes weekly individual/group counseling, drug & alcohol testing, mental health treatment, and regular attendance at Active Minds Initiative (AMI) Self-Help meetings. You will be provided with referrals for vocational training, education &/or job placement services. The VTC program is a minimum of 12 months with on-going aftercare services available to all who successfully complete Phase IV.

Typical entry into the Veterans Treatment Court will be before your case is settled by judicial procedure. Supervision will include random drug & alcohol testing and unannounced law enforcement home visits. Successful completion through Phase IV of the program may result in having the charges amended, dismissed, and/or termination of probation, as applicable. Failure or discharge from the program will result in further prosecution of your case.

## **Confidentiality**

By law, some of your case is public record. However, information regarding your mental health, treatment, and related services are not available to the public and will only be made available to probation, the prosecution, your defense attorney, the court, and agencies that provide treatment and services to you during your time in the program. The confidential information you provided for participation in this program will remain confidential and will not be used to prosecute you. To participate in this treatment program, you will be required to sign the following forms:

- Informed Consent: Program Participation
- Interagency Release of Information or Authorization
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) Authorization Form A: Enrollment into Research
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) Authorization Form B: Research Recruitment
- Any additional forms needed for treatment

These forms not only explain your voluntary participation and protections in the program, but they also allow participating agencies to share information as they assist you in accessing treatment and services.

# VTC REQUIREMENTS

## VTC Requirements include:

### **1. Reporting & attendance.**

Attend & be on time for all ordered treatment sessions, appointments, and court appearances. This includes individual & group counseling, educational sessions, doctor appointments, AMI Self-Help meetings, and any other treatment requirements. If you are late for a court appearance, case management appointment, or VTC group session you may not be allowed to participate and will be considered non-compliant. Time in program may be paused or extended at any time due to non-compliance and/or inability to fulfill VTC requirements, including but not limited to court appearances and case management appointments.

You must comply with all conditions of the program as directed by your VTC Court Administrator. You must also notify your Court Administrator prior to any change in residence. If you are unable to report as directed, contact your Court Administrator or Court Liaison immediately and provide documentation for your reason of absence.

Following recommended treatment from our providers is a requirement of the VTC. This is a voluntary program; if you disagree with treatment recommendations, you have the option to return your charges to the traditional court system.

### **2. Submit to random drug & alcohol testing.**

Sobriety is a primary focus of the VTC program, regardless of your charges. A lifestyle free of drugs & alcohol is very important in your treatment process. Throughout the course of the VTC Program, you will not consume alcohol, drugs, or non-treatment team approved narcotic medications. You must notify your treatment team of any prescription or over-the-counter medication or supplements prior to taking them, unless it is a medical emergency.

You must be prepared to provide a urine sample at each visit with Case Management or court appearance. The VTC team will have access to all drug test results, including any failed test, and may order a drug test at any time. If you fail to provide a monitored urine sample, this will be considered a positive drug test. Diluted or altered samples are considered a positive drug test.

Relapse may occur in recovery, the VTC team understands this; however, a positive, diluted, altered, or missed test may result in a court-imposed sanction. Tampering with any drug test may result in program termination. The VTC team will review your overall performance in the program; repeated offenses may result in progressively severe sanctions or termination from the program.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT YOU PUT INTO YOUR BODY. Some substances that are prohibited during your time in the VTC include, **but are not limited to:**

- VAPING - Some vaping products may result in positive SCRAM or urinalysis readings. If you choose to vape, you will be required to bring your vaping products into Case Management for review and testing. If your products cause positive results, you will be required to cease use and find alternative products.
- CBD, Delta 8, Delta 10, hemp, THC derivative products, and Kratom
- Poppy seeds
- Creatine
- Alcohol-containing OTC Medicines and mouthwash.
- Any substance not regulated by the FDA.

Please reference your Urine Abstinence Testing and Incidental Alcohol Exposure Contract for further details.

### **3. Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM)**

All participants will be required to use a SCRAM device for a minimum of the first two Phases. Determination for SCRAM return is based off the charges, Alcohol & Drug Assessments, and recommendation of the VTC team.

See page 9 for more information on the SCRAM device and SCRAM compliance.

### **4. Abide by Curfew Regulations & Submit Proper Travel Requests/Curfew Extensions**

During your time in the VTC, you will abide by the proper curfew\* for each designated Phase. Curfew increases as you progress through the program – please see individual Phase requirement details on pages 14-17 for more information.

\*Adjusted curfew details for night/24-hour shift occupations are made on a case-by-case basis.

If you need to make travel arrangements, you will need to submit a Travel Request to your Court Administrator no later than 2 weeks (14 days) before your departure date. Travel Requests must be utilized any time you are not staying at your residence, regardless if your destination is local. Requests for Curfew Extensions must be submitted 1 week (7 days) in advance. Emergency situations will be handled on an individual basis.

There is no limitation on distance you may travel during your time in the VTC. Travel Requests and Curfew Extensions are approved subject to compliance with VTC regulations. While on approved travel, curfews do not apply. Depending on length and details of travel, individual compliance, and Case Management discretion, SCRAM device may be required.

- Military Deployments/Training Exercises/TDY – we highly encourage our Active Duty participants to continue on the mission as planned. If you come across orders during your time in the VTC, you may travel and execute as necessary without punitive repercussions. If orders interfere with court requirements (court/case management appointments, treatment/AMI plans, etc.), your time will be paused until you are able to return to full-compliance with VTC regulations.

During your time in the VTC, you are NOT permitted to travel/visit locations where the primary business is alcohol/substance related. This includes, but is not limited to: bars, breweries/distilleries, liquor/beer stores, etc. You MAY go to restaurants that have bars in them, however, you are NOT to sit at the bar area. You must utilize the restaurant portion of the establishment. Additionally, you are not to be in the vicinity of known criminal activity, to include, but not limited to, use of illegal substances.

## **5. Home Visit Checks**

Home visit checks are performed to ensure curfew is obeyed, alcohol & drugs are not present in the home, and that participants are living in a healthy environment. You as a participant need to address the Law Enforcement Official directly; “I was asleep” is not an option. Failure to cooperate or adhere to home visit guidelines may result in sanction.

You may not have alcohol or illicit/non-prescribed drugs in your home throughout the duration of your time in the VTC. If you do not live alone, please be sure to share this handbook and the requirements of the VTC with those who reside with you to ensure they will be supportive of your compliance in the program.



## **6. Court Etiquette**

While rehabilitative in nature, VTC is still Court. Our Judge is a real Judge. You will use proper courtroom etiquette, to include, but not limited to, addressing the Judge as **“Your Honor”** or **“Sir”**. Failure to adhere to court decorum may result in being dismissed and marked absent from court. Please reference pages 22-23 for additional details.

## **7. Community Engagement**

During your time in the VTC, you will be required to be actively engaged in one of the following, or a hybrid of multiple options:

- Full-Time Employment
- Full-Time Educational Path
- Public Service (10 hours/week if not employed/in-school)

# SCRAM

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

- You will have a minimum of 4 SCRAM alerts daily
  - You will assist in setting up these times.
  - Alerts are set to individualized schedules – will not impede on sleep cycle
- You will maintain the SCRAM for a minimum of Phase I & II
- DO NOT tamper with the SCRAM device or attempt to open the battery compartment. If you are having concerns, address them with Court Administrators.
  - Straws/batteries/chargers/case are replaceable items.
- Treat your SCRAM like your cellphone
  - Keep it with you at all times.
  - Charge nightly to avoid depleted battery.
  - Do NOT store in vehicle or in extreme hot/cold temperatures.
- If you miss an alert – self-initiate and email Court Administrators.
- If your device tells you to test again due to: poor photo, blowing too hard/not hard enough, incomplete test – test again. No need to contact Court Administrators.
- If you receive a “20-minute retest” – email Court Administrators.
  - DO NOT MISS A 20-minute retest. This may result in sanction.
  - Stop eating/drinking, wash hands, and rinse your mouth with water prior to retest.
- Courtesy text messages from SCRAM network are for courtesy purposes only. These texts are not always accurate or may not be received due to poor signal, etc. – missing a SCRAM due to lack of text message is NOT an excuse.

# **TREATMENT/SELF-HELP (AMI'S)**

## **Treatment Procedures**

The VTC team will assist you in scheduling an Alcohol & Drug Assessment through an outside entity (commonly through SUDCC, the VA, or a civilian provider) to assess what level of treatment will best meet your needs. Recommendations may include counseling, outpatient, intensive outpatient, or residential treatment if appropriate. Following recommended treatment from our providers is a requirement of the VTC. This is a voluntary program; if you disagree with treatment regulations, you have the option to return your charges to the traditional court system.

If you are admitted to a residential treatment program, your treatment plan will include the requirements of that program. Upon release from a residential program, you will continue your participation in the program as directed by the Court and treatment team.

If you are not admitted into a residential treatment program, you will participate in a multi-component, outpatient program developed with your treatment providers and Court Administrators which includes developing a treatment plan, drug testing, counseling, recovery support services, AMI Self-Help meetings, and working with your mentor.

If you are eligible for VA services, you will be required to utilize the VA for your treatment needs. If you elect to not utilize VA services, alternate private services will be paid for out of pocket by you, the Participant. If you are not eligible for VA services, you will be served by alternate means, provided by the Court. You will be responsible for finding alternative treatment options if provided options are not conducive to your scheduling.

## **Active Minds Initiative (AMI) Self-Help**

You will be required to attend Active Minds Initiative (AMI) Self-Help events. The frequency of required attendance is determined by your progress in the program and your phase level. Attendance is an important part of the process and not to be taken lightly. You must provide proof of attendance to your Court Administrator at each Case Management meeting. Failure to document or to provide proof of attendance will lead to court issued Sanction.

AMI Self-Help events will familiarize you with the philosophy of self-improvement effort and help you to create social bonds with others with similar life experiences. Your Court Administrator will provide you with information regarding the type, time, and location of these events. Your Court Administrator will also help you discover AMI Self-Help events in your community. It is imperative you work with your Court Administrator and treatment providers throughout the course of the VTC Program to determine the best possible AMI Self-Helps for you.

Common examples of AMI events include, but are not limited to: attendance at local support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Smart Recovery, Celebrate Recovery, Reboot Recovery, or other mental health/substance related support groups; veteran treatment specific yoga, individualized treatment appointments through EBH/SUDCC, the VA, or civilian treatment entities; and individual/marital/family counseling services. If your charges are domestic/aggravated assault or violent in nature, you will be required to attend an anger management and/or batterer's intervention program as determined by your treatment team.

You are required to attend VTC group session on Tuesday at 12:00 p.m. on your scheduled court date; it will count it towards your weekly AMI requirements. VTC group session starts promptly at 12:00 p.m.; if you are late, you will not be allowed to attend and therefore reported absent/ noncompliant.

Counseling is comprised of two separate formats: individual & group. As part of your treatment plan, you will be required to participate in both types of counseling if it is appropriate. Together they are designed to develop self-awareness, self-discipline, and coping mechanisms necessary to maintain sobriety and overcome obstacles to personal growth. You may be required to attend additional treatment such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) groups, medical treatment, anger management, parenting, or any other intervention the treatment team recognizes as needed. Your attendance at both individual and group counseling sessions will be reported to the VTC team as part of your progress report. You must have prior permission from your Court Administrator through the treatment team to be excused from any counseling sessions.

# **ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

## **Mentor Program**

You will be assigned a volunteer veteran mentor from the community to support your efforts to create a better life. You will meet with your mentor, at a minimum, after every court appearance. The mentor is not part of the VTC Treatment Team. What you and your mentor discuss is confidential unless there is reason to believe that you will cause harm to yourself or others. The mentor is there as moral support and to act as your life-line when you need help. Make sure you know how to contact your mentor at all times.

## **Social Services**

Upon your entry into the Veterans Treatment Court program, your treatment team will assess your housing, transportation, family situation & general living needs. When appropriate, the team will refer you to local, state &/or county agencies for additional assistance.

## **Transitional Services**

If you are recently transitioned, currently transitioning, or expecting to be processed out of active duty during your time in the VTC, your Court Administrators will assist you in making appointments with the Veterans Service Organization and the VA Health Department as necessary and applicable to determine your eligibility for benefits and services.

The VTC offers assistance through the TN Department of Labor for Veteran Employment opportunities.

Additionally, your Court Administrator may assist you in your education pursuits by connecting you with services such as Vocational Rehab, Veterans Upward Bound, and additional university VA offices to analyze your available benefits.

# COURT PHASES

Veterans Treatment Court is a five-phase, highly-structured program, lasting for a minimum of 12 months. Individual progress will vary. Each phase consists of specified treatment objectives. Full compliance with VTC regulations is required within each phase before progressing to next phase. Basic requirements for advancement from each phase are described below.

## **Advancement Criteria:**

- No positive drug or alcohol test results (including missed, tampered, or diluted tests).
- No unexcused absences from court appearances, case management appointments, AMI Self-Help meetings, or any other appointment ordered by the court.
- Non-narcotic medication taken as directed.
- No curfew violations.
- Actively engaged in community engagement (work/school/public service).
- Documentation of required minimum attendance of AMI Self-Help events.
- Complete Alcohol & Drug assessment (Phase I) and follow all recommended treatment (on-going through Phases). Demonstrate a positive attitude and adjustment to ongoing treatment.
- Achievement of stable living arrangements & healthy interpersonal relationships.
- Submit a written Phase advancement essay to be read in court among peers, VTC Team, and Judge.

\*\*\*Note: Participants who enter the VTC for a subsequent cycle following prior completion/termination/withdrawal will be subject to increased phase requirements.

# PHASE I

## TREATMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Length: **Minimum of 60 days**

In Phase I, you will be assigned a Court Administrator & Mentor. Your needs will be assessed by the VTC team and through an Alcohol & Drug assessment. Your progress will be closely monitored & reported to the VTC team.

Phase I requirements include:

- Complete VTC Intake & Initial Case Management appointments.
- Maintain SCRAM and drug screening compliance.
- Complete Alcohol & Drug Assessment (regardless of charges).
- Complete PTSD Assessment, if necessary.
- Identify community engagement path (full-time employment, full-time school, or 10 hours public service per week).
- Attend Case Management appointments weekly.
- Attend Court & VTC Group weekly.
- Complete 4 AMI Self-Help hours per week (mandatory VTC Group counts as 1 AMI).
- Maintain curfew compliance – 8:00 P.M. Release from curfew is 6:00 A.M.
- Enroll in VA Healthcare System, if qualified.
- \*\*\*Note: Participants who enter the VTC for a subsequent cycle following prior completion/termination/withdrawal will be subject to increased phase requirements.

# PHASE II

## ONGOING TREATMENT

Length: **Minimum of 90 days**

In Phase II, your treatment plan will be updated to identify ongoing treatment goals. Counseling and meetings will focus on areas that are challenging for you and will identify ways of coping with stressful situations.

Phase II requirements include:

- Maintain SCRAM and drug screening compliance.
- Continue treatment plan as identified by treatment providers and Court Administrators.
- Continue community engagement path (full-time employment, full-time school, or 10 hours public service per week).
- Attend Case Management appointments biweekly.
- Attend Court & VTC Group biweekly.
- Complete 3 AMI Self-Help hours per week.
- Maintain curfew compliance – 9:00 P.M. Release from curfew is 6:00 A.M.

\*\*\*Note: Participants who enter the VTC for a subsequent cycle following prior completion/termination/withdrawal will be subject to increased phase requirements.



# PHASE III

## STABILIZATION/MENTORING

Length: **Minimum of 90 days**

Phase III will address ongoing recovery needs. The focus will be on daily living skills. This phase is designed to support you as a productive & responsible member of our community. If there are no compliance concerns, SCRAM device may be turned in upon entering Phase III.

Phase III requirements include:

- Maintain drug screening compliance.
- Continue treatment plan as identified by treatment providers and Court Administrators.
- Continue community engagement path (full-time employment, full-time school, or 10 hours public service per week).
- Attend Case Management appointments every 3 weeks.
- Attend Court & VTC Group once every 3 weeks.
- Complete 3 AMI Self-Help hours per week.
- Maintain curfew compliance – 10:00 P.M. Release from curfew is 6:00 A.M.

\*\*\*Note: Participants who enter the VTC for a subsequent cycle following prior completion/termination/withdrawal will be subject to increased phase requirements.

# PHASE IV

## ACHIEVEMENT/ VTC FOR LIFE TRANSITION

Length: **Minimum of 120 days**

Phase IV will transition from the Veterans Treatment Court structure to a lifestyle more representative of what you will experience following phase IV completion.

Phase IV requirements include:

- Maintain drug screening compliance.
- Continue treatment plan as identified by treatment providers and Court Administrators.
- Continue community engagement path (full-time employment, full-time school, or 10 hours public service per week).
- Attend Case Management appointments once every 4 weeks.
- Attend Court & VTC Group once every 4 weeks.
- Complete 3 AMI Self-Help hours per week.
- Maintain curfew compliance – 12:00 A.M. Release from curfew is 6:00 A.M.
- Complete Exit Interview with Court Administrators
- Discuss judgment and expungement paperwork with attorney.

\*\*\*Note: Participants who enter the VTC for a subsequent cycle following prior completion/termination/withdrawal will be subject to increased phase requirements.

# VTC FOR LIFE (PHASE V)

## Inactive Phase: **On-going services for life**

Upon successful completion of Phases I through IV of the VTC Program, you will be granted membership in VTC for Life. Membership in the VTC for Life program assures the resources and access to events granted to VTC participants remain available to you for the rest of your days. The Veterans Treatment Court Team and Staff understand that your future can become a difficult journey. This understanding assures that you, as an alum of our program, retain all of the support we can give to remain successful in accomplishing your life goals.

After the transition ceremony, your case will be resolved as agreed upon on your entry into VTC. Your family will be invited to join you as the VTC team and Community congratulate your accomplishment.

The promotion ceremony is conducted in the Montgomery County Court Complex. Attendance is mandatory for all participants throughout their duration of VTC.

Phase V benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Open invitation to VTC Group and Court.
- Open invitation to meet with Court Administrators.
- On-going assistance with additional and transitional services as outlined on page 12.

# INCENTIVES

## Incentivizing Productivity:

The Veterans Treatment Court places as much emphasis on incentivizing productive behaviors as it does on reducing crime, substance use, and other infractions, and will strive to reward participants for making progress in their recovery. Some examples of progress include: attending and participating in group(s), attending appointments, having a positive attitude, maintaining a clean/sober lifestyle, proper time management, establishing healthy relationships, making positive choices, being honest with the VTC team with struggles, communicating with mentor, completing homework, and supporting others. Incentives used by the VTC include, but are not limited to:

- Certificates for completion of the phases
- Certificates for completion of classes
- Verbal recognition
- Applause from the Judge, Team and others present
- Handshake from Judge
- Remove/Reduce sanctions
- Travel privileges
- Leave early from court
- Medallions or coins
- Other tangible rewards

At a minimum, during each court session the VTC Judge will specifically address these five targeted behaviors:

- 100% attendance at all required treatment meetings (IOP, Aftercare, individual/group).
- Current on all court ordered obligations (ITP).
- 100% attendance at all required self-help meetings.
- Satisfied required work/school/community service hours.
- All drug screen test results are negative.

Individuals that are compliant with all five targeted behaviors MAY BE eligible for additional incentives packages, and/or a combination:

- Gift Cards
- Last minute travel request
- Last minute curfew modifications
- Eliminate one (1) court appearance from the month
- Reduction or omitting one (1) week of self-help
- Reduction or omitting one (1) week of Remote Breath Monitoring

# SANCTIONS & SELF-REPORTING

If you are not in compliance with VTC standards, the Veterans Treatment Court Judge may impose court sanctions. These are not additional charges.

## Administrative Sanctions

Examples of sanctions related to general non-compliance may include, but are not limited to: arriving late or missing court/group/case management appointments, failure to complete required AMI hours or treatment appointments, SCRAM non-compliance, forging/falsifying treatment/AMI documentation, violating curfew, and dishonesty with VTC Team.

Administrative Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

**1<sup>st</sup> offense** – 10 hours of Public Service to be logged within 1 week of sanction.

**2<sup>nd</sup> offense** – 20 hours of Public Service to be logged within 2 weeks of sanction.

**3<sup>rd</sup> offense** – 30 hours of Public Service to be logged within a time frame at the discretion of the VTC team.

Administrative Sanctions may also include one or more of the following:

- Increased drug screening, court, and case management appearances.
- Increased AMI requirements.
- Time added to current phase.
- Recycle to previous program phase.
- Periods of incarceration.

## Alcohol/Substance Sanctions

Examples of substance related sanctions may include, but are not limited to: positive SCRAM reading, positive drug screen results, self-reported use/relapse, use of prohibited substances, and excessive missed period of SCRAM compliance. Self-reporting of use/relapse is highly encouraged and is a positive sign of treatment progression. Lying or attempting to hide use may result in increased or additional sanctioning.

Alcohol/Substance Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

**1st offense** – 10 hours of Public Service to be logged within 1 week of sanction.

**2nd offense** – Serve 1 night in jail\*.

**3rd offense**- Serve 2-3 nights in jail\*.

\*Jail sanctions are a revocation of bond and will not appear as additional charges on your record.

Alcohol/Substance Sanction actions may also include one or more of the following:

- All Alcohol/Substance sanctions will include a 30-day (minimum) addition of time to current phase. Additionally, time will be paused until drug screens return to negative state.
- Reissue of SCRAM device until completion of program.
- Increased drug screening, court, and case management appearances.

ALL sanctions are handled by the Judge/VTC team on a case-by-case basis and may include a combination of both administrative and substance/alcohol use sanction processing.

Other examples of sanction actions that may also be included in Administrative or Substance/Alcohol sanctions may include:

- Admonishment
- Designated community service hours
- Writing assignments
- Increased support group attendance
- Added or increased daily check-ins
- Home visits
- Suspension of privileges
- Verbal/Written apology to other participants and court
- GPS monitoring
- House Arrest or earlier curfew
- Termination from VTC program



## **Treatment**

While non-compliance will be handled with punitive sanctions, the focus of our program is treatment-based in nature. In addition to punitive sanctions, non-compliance may be addressed with a treatment component to focus on underlying concerns and behaviors.

Treatment components may include, but are not limited to:

- Additional A&D assessments to determine updated treatment needs.
- Increased treatment as recommended by A&D assessment
- Increased AMI requirements
- Additional courses/classes to address needs (anger management, moral reconnection therapy, batterer's intervention, parenting courses, etc.)

## **Driving on a Suspended/Revoked License**

If you do not have a valid driver's license, you must provide supporting documentation and be working to obtain one. If you are charged with driving on a suspended/revoked license, your charges will be addressed in the traditional legal system.

## **Additional Charges**

Participants that violate the law or the VTC program rules must self-report within 24 hours or face enhanced penalties. Once admitted into VTC, new charges may be subject to recourse in the traditional legal system. Time in program may be paused and/or extended until there is a resolution of additional charges.

# COURT ETIQUETTE

It is in the duty of the Court to promote respect for the judicial system and to ensure that court proceedings be conducted in a serious, respectful, and dignified manner.

## **Standards of Appearance**

Appearance will reflect neatness, cleanliness, and self-respect. A person who is not attired appropriately or exhibits grooming which is detrimental and/or destructive to the Court environment shall be required to make arrangements for more suitable appearance. The Judge may reset a case to another court date and require compliance with the dress code.

## **Standards of Dress:**

Unacceptable attire includes, but is not limited to:

NO clothing too tight or too short.

NO “bagging” or “sagging” pants or shorts.

NO midriff tops; muscle shirts, fishnet shirts.

NO biking, gym style, or spandex shorts.

NO transparent or revealing clothing or showing of undergarments.

NO dirty or torn clothing.

NO clothing with pictures/words that advertises substances that are illegal by law.

NO clothing that is offensive, depicts violence, vulgar, racist, sexist, suggestive in nature, sexual acts, profanity, illegal drugs, or indicates gang activity/involvement.

NO caps, hats, or bandanas.

No combs or picks shall be worn in hair.

NO “wild eyes” contact lenses or glasses=snake eyes, bull’s eyes, cat star, whiteout (all white w/ black center), 8 ball, red hot (red w/ white center), zooming or whirly looking;

NO sunglasses over eyes or on top of head.

\*\* When dressing for graduation please remember that those graduating have spent more than a year of their life working towards this goal and we are there to honor their accomplishment.

## **Standards of Behavior:**

Be on time & do not enter and depart courtroom excessively;

DO NOT approach the Judge's bench without permission.

DO NOT rest arms or hands on podium.

Rise when the judge enters and remain standing until the Judge or bailiff announces, "Be Seated" or until the Judge is seated. Rise when the Judge exits the courtroom.

Address the Court as "Judge", "Sir", or "Your Honor"; address opposing parties, counsel, witnesses and court staff or officers as "Mr.", "Mrs.", "Miss", or "Officer". Responses should be answered "yes, sir", "yes, your Honor" or "yes, ma'am".

DO NOT ARGUE WITH THE COURT; do not talk at the same time as the Court, opposing counsel, or witnesses.

NO eating/drinking/gum chewing.

NO smoking.

NO weapons, cell phones, pagers, cameras, or other electronic devices will be allowed in the courtroom.

Racist, sexist, obscene or profane language or gestures are prohibited unless it is pertinent to a case and is elicited and quoting from facts in the case.

Do nothing to disturb or distract the court, counsels, witnesses or other Court personnel. Children must not create a disturbance in the courtroom or in the court building foyer and if you must be in the courtroom they should be left with a guardian due to lengthy court sessions and must not create a disturbance.

# VTC TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

David D. Smith	Director	931-245-3180 ext. 11225	ddsmith@mcgtn.net
Tristen L. Dudley	Court Liaison	931-245-3180 ext. 11247	tldudley@mcgtn.net
Tiffany A. Anderson	Court Administrator	931-245-3180 ext. 11226 931-919-8186 (Work Cell)	taanderson@mcgtn.net
Kimberly R. White	Court Administrator	931-245-3180 ext. 11223 931-801-1247 (Work Cell)	krwhite@mcgtn.net
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Scott Schroeder	Mentor Coordinator	931-801-1556	Saschroeder11@gmail.com
Rev. Jeremiah Walker	VTC Chaplain	931-542-7340	Jerrywalker55@bellsouth.net

## Contact Protocol:

While we highly encourage communication in this program –use common courtesy and common sense in communication patterns.

If it is **during the business day (M-F, 8a-4p)**, call the office phone number with **any questions or concerns.**

Court Liaison will answer the majority of your questions. Court Administrators typically are not responding to phone communication (i.e. calls or texts) through the business day while actively seeing Participants.

While you have access to the Director for ANY situation, standard communication SHOULD be handled at the Court Administrator level, if at all possible.

If it is a **NON-EMERGENCY outside of business hours** (before 8a & after 4pm M-F, weekends) – **UTILIZE EMAIL.**

Our cell phone lines are for **EMERGENCY** and **PRESSING ISSUE** purposes. There is **NO EXCUSE** to send text messages between the hours of 8pm-8am or on weekends for non-emergency purposes. **If it is an emergency, please do not hesitate to call.**

**Emergencies/reasons to call include:** life/limb/eye-sight. Going to the hospital. Threat of harm to self/others/etc. SCRAM 20-minute retest. True SCRAM malfunction/concern (lost, will not power on, etc.). Potential of relapse. **Use your discretion – if you truly believe it cannot wait, please call.**

**Emergencies DO NOT include:** Being late on SCRAM alert or missing SCRAM alert. Logistic questions (“what time is my case management?” “Can I change my travel request?”). These topics WILL be addressed via email, via phone call to the office line during business hours, or at your Case Management appointment.

Again, **communication is KEY and HIGHLY ENCOURAGED.** Communication will get you through this program!! However, **let’s use common sense & courtesy.**