

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
STATEWIDE CLOSING PLAN: FULL DAY CLOSINGS
VERMONT JUDICIAL BRANCH**

Q. I thought that courts were supposed to be open at least eight hours per day except Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. Is this plan legal?

A. The Supreme Court has the power to administer the Judicial Branch, including statutory authority to furlough and close courts for up to 12 days per year.

Q. If my court is closed on a day when I try to file a document that is due that day, what will it mean? Will I be in default or will I be considered to have missed the deadline?

A. For the full-day state-wide closing, Furlough days declared under this section shall have the same effect as holidays under 1 V.S.A. § 371 for the purpose of counting time under the rules of court procedure and the Vermont Statutes Annotated

Q. For how long will the Closing Plan be in effect?

A. The current plan is based on the current fiscal year budget. Barring changes in circumstances, the Plan will be in effect until the end of the fiscal year [June 30, 2010.]

Q. Will the Supreme Court close one day per month?

A. Yes, the Supreme Court will be closed to the public in accordance with the posted schedule

Q. How will the courts handle relief from abuse proceedings during the half-day period that the courts are closed each week?

A. Parties seeking relief from abuse orders should call the following toll-free number during periods when the court is closed, just as they would for nights, weekends and holidays: **1-800-540-9990.**

Q. How will the handle other emergency matters that require the court's immediate response, such as search warrants, bail calls, and the like?

A. These kinds of matters will be handled on a court-by-court basis according to systems developed by that court in collaboration with other partners in the justice system.

Q. During the full day that the court is closed, will I be able to speak with someone to answer questions or otherwise provide assistance to me?

A. No, the situation will be the same that exists at night and on the weekends. With the exception of Relief from Abuse orders, which will be handled through the 800 number noted above, no one will be available at the court to answer questions or provide other assistance.