

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/the-administration-of-justice-under-emergency-conditions-lessons-following-the-attack-on-the-world-trade-center>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

In the first hours and days after the terrorist attack on September 11, the courts in lower Manhattan were inaccessible; prosecutors and defense lawyers lost access to phones, files, and computers; and police officers were not available to testify at hearings and trials. How did the justice system cope under these conditions? With clear direction from New York State's chief judge, the courts were determined to reopen and to conduct business as usual at the earliest possible date. This report shows how the courts not only reopened quickly but were committed to upholding the principle of individual rather than mass justice. The report offers a set of recommendations that officials in New York City and elsewhere can follow to plan for future emergencies.

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