

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: JUDICIAL EMERGENCY ORDER : NO. 2020-J-0094

EMERGENCY ORDER

AND NOW, this 17th day of March, 2020, the Court having declared a judicial emergency in the 31st Judicial District of Pennsylvania on March 17, 2020; and it being the intention to protect the health and safety of the public and court employees and maintain as high a level of operations and service as possible without compromising legal rights; and pursuant to Pa.R.J.A. No. 1952(B)(2);

IT IS ORDERED, effective immediately, each judicial office may conduct such business by telephone, video-conferencing, facsimile, scanning and electronic filing as it determines to be appropriate and feasible, subject to constitutional restrictions.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, effective immediately, the work of the Court shall be processed as follows:

1.) Civil Division:

- a.) Arbitrations are continued through and including April 14, 2020, to a new date to be determined.
- b.) Jury trials are continued through and including April 14, 2020, to a new date to be determined.
- c.) Non-Jury trials will be scheduled by the Assigned Judge.
- d.) Motions/Arguments/Conferences (Status, Pre-Trial and Settlement) will be scheduled in the normal course by the Assigned Judge.
- e.) Unassigned miscellaneous matters (e.g., Petitions for Change of Name, Structured Settlements, etc.) will be scheduled in the normal course before the Miscellaneous Motions Judge.
- f.) Magisterial District Judge civil hearings scheduled through and including April 14, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined by the Magisterial District Judge.
- g.) Mortgage Conciliation Conferences scheduled for March 18 and April 1 and 8, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined.
- h.) License suspension hearings scheduled for April 13, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined.

2.) Family Division:

- a.) Preliminary hearings under the Protection From Abuse Act will be scheduled in the normal course.
- b.) Final hearings and indirect criminal contempt hearings under the Protection From Abuse Act will be scheduled in the normal course, except that hearings scheduled for March 17, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined.
- c.) Custody conferences before the Custody Hearing Officer will be conducted by telephone to be arranged by the Family Court Office.
- d.) Custody pre-trial conferences and trials will be scheduled by the Assigned Judge.
- e.) Domestic Relations conferences will be conducted as scheduled by telephone when possible.
- f.) Domestic Relations hearings will be scheduled in the normal course.
- g.) Domestic Relations Bench Warrants will be scheduled in the normal course.
- h.) Domestic Relations Exceptions will be scheduled by the Assigned Judge.
- i.) Divorce Master's conferences will be conducted by telephone to be arranged by the Family Court Office.
- j.) Miscellaneous motions and petitions will be scheduled in the normal course before the Miscellaneous Motions Judge.

3.) Criminal Division:

- a.) Jury and non-jury trials are continued through and including April 3, 2020, to a new date to be determined.
- b.) Summary appeals scheduled for March 23, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined.
- c.) Probation/Parole revocation hearings are continued through and including April 3, 2020, to a new date to be determined.
- d.) Costs, Fines and Restitution hearings are continued through and including April 14, 2020, to a new date to be determined.
- e.) Bench warrants, body attachment and other emergency matters will be scheduled in the normal course.
- f.) All other hearings scheduled through and including April 3, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined by the Assigned Judge.
- g.) Magisterial District Judge criminal preliminary hearings, summary trials and truancy hearings scheduled through and including April 3, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined by the Magisterial District Judge.

4.) Juvenile Division:

- a.) Delinquency detention hearings will be scheduled in the normal course and conducted by telephone or video-conferencing.
- b.) Delinquency adjudication and disposition hearings scheduled through and including April 3, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined; however, hearings for juveniles in detention will be conducted by telephone or video-conferencing if possible.
- c.) Delinquency review of disposition and review of placement hearings will be continued through and including April 3, 2020, to a new date to be

determined; except, any essential hearings (30-day reviews for detained juveniles) will be conducted by telephone or video-conference if possible.

- d.) Dependency permanency review hearings are continued through and including April 3, 2020, to a new date to be determined.
- e.) Dependency shelter care, adjudication and disposition hearings will be conducted, if necessary, by telephone with all counsel and parties as scheduled by Administrative Judge Reichley.

5.) Orphans' Court Division:

- a.) Guardianship/Incapacity hearings scheduled for March 30, 2020, will be heard as determined by the Assigned Judge and subsequent hearings will be scheduled by the Assigned Judge; the alleged incapacitated person will be excused from attending such hearings.
- b.) Audits scheduled for April 3, 2020 will be held; counsel are excused from attending; the appearance of any objectors will be noted and reported to counsel.
- c.) Adoptions scheduled for April 3, 2020, are continued to a new date to be determined.
- d.) Marriage License applications may be submitted on-line and the Orphans' Court Clerk will determine whether applicants must appear in person to complete the application.
- e.) Motions scheduled for April 3, 2020 are continued to a new date to be determined.
- f.) Conferences scheduled for April 6, 2020 will be conducted by telephone as directed by the Assigned Judge.
- g.) Termination of parental rights hearings scheduled for April 8 and 9, 2020, are continued to April 23 and 24, 2020.

6.) Sheriff's Sales scheduled for March 27, 2020, are continued to the next scheduled date.

7.) Naturalization ceremony scheduled for April 8, 2020, is continued to July 1, 2020.

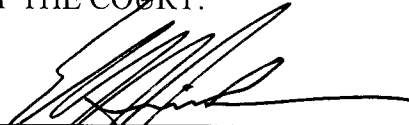
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED the operation of Pa.R.Crim.P.No. 600 is suspended in the 31st Judicial District through April 3, 2020, so that the time period from the date of this order through April 3, 2020, shall be excluded from the time computation under Pa.R.Crim.P.No. 600(C) without prejudice to a criminal defendant's right to a speedy trial under the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED time calculations for the purpose of time computation relevant to court cases and other judicial business, as well as time deadlines, are suspended during the effective dates of this order, subject to constitutional restrictions.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED additional uses of advanced communication technology may be utilized to conduct court proceedings, subject to constitutional restrictions.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED future scheduling involving essential functions is not affected by this Order.

BY THE COURT:



EDWARD D. REIBMAN, P.J.