

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

CIVIL DIVISION

IN RE: ADOPTION OF LOCAL)
RULE OF CIVIL) No. 2022-1
PROCEDURE L-204.2)

FILED

NOV 01 2022

L. H. HOUGH
PROTHONOTARY

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER


AND NOW, this 31st day of October, 2022, having received approval from the appropriate Rules Committee pursuant to Pa. R. J. A. 103(d)(4), it is hereby ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED that Washington County Local Rule of Civil Procedure L-204.2 (attached) is hereby adopted, effective thirty (30) days after publication of this ORDER in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

This ORDER shall be processed in accordance with Pa. R. J. A. 103(d)(5) and (6). The District Court Administrator is directed to:

1. Distribute copies of the adopted local rule to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*;
2. File one (1) copy with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts;
3. Publish the local rule on the Court's website within thirty (30) days of the effective date; and
4. Cause a copy hereof to be published in the *Washington County Reports* once a week for two (2) successive weeks at the expense of the County of Washington.

From the record

ATTEST:


PROTHONOTARY
LAURA H. HOUGH, PROTHONOTARY
My Term Expires First Monday in January, 2024

BY THE COURT:



_____, P.J.
John F. DiSalle, President Judge

L-204.2. Papers and Records.

(a) The Court, which shall for purposes of this subsection include a Judge, staff of a judge, the District Court Administrator, and court administration staff, may remove original papers, records, exhibits, or transcripts (“case records”), from the Office of the Prothonotary for official court business, unless otherwise restricted by law or order of court.

(b) If appointed by the Court, the following individuals shall have the authority to remove case records from the Office of the Prothonotary:

- (1) Conference or hearing officers;
- (4) Chair of the Board of View;
- (3) Chair of a compulsory arbitration panel;
- (4) Master appointed by the court;
- (5) Mediator or special presiding officer; and

(6) Other court staff or any person(s) specifically authorized by the President Judge or order of court.

Note: If there is a question concerning the authority of an individual to access a case record under this subsection, the Prothonotary is to seek guidance from the President Judge, District Court Administrator, or judge to whom the case is assigned.

(c) Except as provided in preceding subsections or applicable rule of procedure, no case records shall be removed from the Office of the Prothonotary except upon subpoena *duces tecum* or order of court. Nothing in this rule is intended to prohibit the removal and/or transmittal of case records pursuant to a rule of appellate procedure.

(d) The Prothonotary shall maintain the docket and act as the custodian of the record for actions filed pursuant to the Mental Health Procedures Act, 50 P.S. § 7101, *et seq.*, in a manner prescribed by the Court.

(1) All case records are confidential pursuant to the Act, and may only be accessed and/or removed by the Judge, staff of the assigned judge, District Court Administrator, or court administration staff for official court business.

(2) Absent order of court, the record may only be inspected by the mental health review officer, or counsel of record for the party involved.

(e) Access to case records, docketing information, digital records, and/or images of case filings that are or can be made available or otherwise accessed through computer software or digital case

management systems, shall be determined by the Court through rule, order, policy, or regulation, except as otherwise provided by law.

Comment: Access to case records by the public is governed by the *Case Records Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System*. See Local Rule of Judicial Administration 3000 and 3001. The Policy in no way alters the ability and authority of the Court, upon application of a party or acting *sua sponte*, to seal a record or any portion of a record for reasons not inconsistent with the Policy, or other applicable governing authority.