

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

CIVIL DIVISION

IN RE: 27TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT)
DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL) Nos. 2020-1
EMERGENCY) 24 W.M. 2020

FILED
NOV 13 2020
L. H. HOUGH
PROTHONOTARY

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

AND NOW, this 13th day of November, 2020, the Court having declared a judicial emergency in the 27th Judicial District of Pennsylvania, effective March 16, 2020, and having previously extended the local judicial emergency through December 31, 2020, and in light of information concerning the increase in COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth and the immediate region, it is hereby **ORDERED** and **DECREED** as follows:

1. The Court has **DETERMINED** that a temporary restriction in court operations is necessary to ensure the health and well-being of employees, litigants and counsel, and the public that access judicial facilities. Specifically, the purpose of this action is to avoid unnecessary gatherings of individuals within judicial facilities.
2. All non-essential proceedings and conferences are **CANCELED** or to be held instead using **ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**, effective November 16, 2020, until November 30, 2020. Individual common pleas judges shall use their discretion in determining the essential nature of any in-person proceedings, and are responsible for rescheduling any canceled proceedings.
3. Magisterial District Courts shall only be open to: (1) accept bail, filings, and/or payments; (2) hold preliminary arraignments; (3) issue arrest and search warrants, and all other functions pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Criminal Procedure 117; (4) emergency protection from abuse cases; and (5) to hold preliminary hearings involving incarcerated defendants.

- a. Magisterial District Judges are responsible for rescheduling any matters that are canceled because of this Order.
4. All jury trial proceedings scheduled to occur between November 16 and November 27, 2020, are **CANCELED**.
 - a. Statewide rules pertaining to the rule-based right of criminal defendants to a prompt trial remain suspended as set forth in this Court's Order dated September 14, 2020. Any delays resulting from this Order shall be considered court delays and constitute excludable time for purposes of the application of Rule 600, subject to constitutional limitations.
 5. All common pleas filing offices (*e.g.*, Clerk of Courts, Domestic Relations, Prothonotary, and Register of Wills) shall **REMAIN OPEN** to conduct official business for the duration of this Order.

It is further **ORDERED** that all other provisions contained in this Court's Administrative Order dated September 14, 2020, that are not in conflict with this Order shall remain in full force and effect.

The District Court Administrator is directed to post a copy of this Order on all entry doors of the Washington County Courthouse and all magisterial district courts, and to post a copy on the Court's website at www.washingtoncourts.us. A copy of this Order shall also be transmitted to the Washington County Bar Association for distribution to its members. Notification by email may satisfy the requirements of this Order.

BY THE COURT



Katherine B. Emery, President Judge P.J.