

FHMS GUIDE TO PA AND NJ CIVIL COURT PROCEEDINGS AND DEADLINES

Last updated: January 18, 2021

FHMS has been closely monitoring the response of our state and federal courts in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is our guide to the most recent information on civil proceedings and deadlines in all courts in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Several courts are using Advanced Communication Technologies (“ACT”) and requiring compliance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”).

PENNSYLVANIA – ALL COURTS

- The general, statewide judicial emergency declared and maintained via the Supreme Court's Orders shall cease as of June 1, 2020. The previous Orders shall expire according to their own terms.
- Should President Judges in the remaining judicial districts deem it prudent to exercise emergency powers beyond the time of an existing declaration, they may also file a declaration of an emergency in their districts. Such a declaration generally shall be self-effectuating, subject to any subsequent order by this Court or the local court.
- Under any administrative order issued by an intermediate court or local emergency declaration, a President Judge is hereby specifically empowered, subject to state and federal constitutional requirements, to do any or all of the following:
 - Limit in-person access and proceedings to safeguard the health and safety of court personnel, court users, and members of the public;
 - Suspend statewide rules that restrict the use of ACT;
 - Suspend statewide rules that impede court filings by means other than in-person delivery;
 - Suspend statewide rules pertaining to right of criminal defendants to a prompt trial; and
 - Suspend jury trials until they can be conducted with prevailing health and safety norms.

PENNSYLVANIA SUPERIOR COURT

- The Superior Court will continue to accept filings through PACFile electronic filing, through the United States Postal Service, or by commercial delivery carrier, and will remain open to conduct all court business.
- Due dates for filings are restored to the date specified on this Court's docket, e.g., filing due dates for briefs or docketing statements and responses to show cause orders.
- The Superior Court will continue to utilize ACT for argument court sessions, for those cases which cannot be submitted on legal briefs.
- All emergency motions shall be filed through the PACFile electronic filing system and must be clearly titled as an Emergency Motion. Emergency motions may take longer than usual to address.

PENNSYLVANIA COMMONWEALTH COURT

- Access to the PJC remains limited to persons conducting official judiciary business by appointment or appearing at scheduled court proceedings. There is no general public access.
- All filings must be done electronically by PACFile, by email to commcourtfiling@pacourts.us, by U.S. Mail, or in person at the Court's PJC filing office by appointment only.
- Access to courtrooms during oral argument sessions is limited to counsel of record and Court personnel.
- All persons appearing in the PJC must adhere to posted COVID-19 precautions and procedures, including but not limited to, the wearing of facemasks and social distancing.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – ADAMS COUNTY

- **Judicial Emergency extended through April 30, 2021.**
- Public access to court offices for court business is prohibited except as otherwise provided in this Order.
- No visitor or employee may enter the Adams County Courthouse or the Adams County Human Services Building unless wearing a protective face covering. This restriction shall not apply to children under the age of 2 or individuals who cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition.
- The Adams County Security Department may request individuals entering those buildings for court business to submit to a body temperature check.
- If a person refuses to wear a protective face covering, submit to a temperature check, or submits to a temperature check and displays an elevated temperature, that person shall not be permitted access.
- All non-emergency civil filings shall continue to be filed by regular mail, electronic filing, or by deposit box.
- Unless otherwise specified, all evidentiary hearings shall be limited to parties and counsel. All witnesses shall appear telephonically or by other ACT.
- All arbitration hearings scheduled in January are cancelled and continued to a date to be determined.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – ALLEGHENY COUNTY

- **Judicial Emergency extended through March 31, 2021.**
- All court facilities will be open to the public as specified below.
- Only persons with essential court business are guaranteed admission into any court facility, subject to compliance with CDC and PA DOH recommendations and signage posted in or on court facilities. Friends and family members may be required to wait outside the facility.
- Sidebar conferences are prohibited until further order of court.
- Non-jury trials and arbitration hearings recommenced in June 2020 and shall continue to be conducted.
- All matters shall be conducted remotely via ACT and no in-person hearings or proceedings shall occur.
- All proceedings that can be conducted remotely shall proceed as scheduled. Proceedings that cannot be conducted using ACT shall be postponed to a date certain after March 31, 2021.
- Persons summoned to appear for jury selection shall not be required to appear.
- Jury trials are postponed to a date certain after January 29, 2021. Parties with civil jury trials scheduled during the judicial emergency should contact Calendar Control to reschedule.
- Parties with an in-person arbitration hearing date scheduled may request that their hearing be rescheduled to another date to proceed remotely using ACT

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – ARMSTRONG COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended through **March 31, 2021**.
- Use of ACT to conduct court proceedings is authorized, subject to constitutional limitations.
- All court participants shall continue to wear face masks at all times while in the courthouse and shall comply with the social distancing protocols as recommended by the CDC and the with the social distancing protocols as recommended by the CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health.
- **All time calculations** for the purposes of time computation relevant to court cases or other judicial business, **including statutes of limitations**, Rule 600 in criminal matters, and general time deadlines, **are suspended** subject to constitutional limitations.
- Civil jury selection and jury trials are suspended through and including the March 2021 trial term.
- All civil matters scheduled through March 31, 2021 may be continued and/or conducted remotely.
- Motions heard by the designated designated Motions Judge shall be restricted to request for injunctive relief relating to public health concerns or any other emergency motion.
- Contested motions may be emailed to the Court Administrator (bcbenton@co.armstrong.pa.us) with the original mailed simultaneously to the Prothonotary's office. All contested motions shall have attached thereto a scheduling order and a proposed order granting the relief requested.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – BEAVER COUNTY

- Guidelines established by the CDC and the Department of Health shall be observed while in the building.
- Conferences and arguments may be conducted by video or telephone conference.
- All cases remaining on the October/November trial term shall be administratively continued to the trial term beginning January 11, 2021.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – BEDFORD COUNTY

- Standard filings will continue to be accepted via email or regular mail. For the Prothonotary/ Clerk of Courts, email pcoc@bedfordcountypa.org.
- All court proceedings shall be open to the public unless already prohibited or restricted by applicable law.
- All courts shall resume normal court business and functions.
- All courtrooms shall limit gallery capacity to a maximum of 50% and operate in such a manner to provide opportunity for personnel, court users and the public to practice social distancing.
- Courts should make efforts to stagger their scheduling to avoid large groups in the courtrooms.
- If hearings can be held with only counsel present, courts shall not require the physical presence of parties.
- All courts should continue to use ACT to conduct court proceedings/conferences when practicable.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – BERKS COUNTY

- Non-essential activities suspended until further notice.
- Any hearing may be scheduled using alternative electronic means, and such alternate electronic means should be utilized when possible.
- When deemed appropriate and necessary, hearings requiring personal appearances may be scheduled at the discretion of the assigned Judge.
- Where parties, attorneys or witnesses are in congregate settings, social distancing shall be observed.
- All persons entering county buildings for court business will wear a mask covering their nose and mouth.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – BLAIR COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through April 30, 2021.**
- In-person access to proceedings is limited to safeguard the health and safety of court personnel, court users, and members of the public.
- Statewide rules that restrict, directly or indirectly, the use of ACT are suspended.
- Court filings by other than in person delivery may be accepted where the capability is present. The Prothonotary will continue to accept filings by e-filing, regular mail and in-person.
 - All filing with the Prothonotary may be made via email to: Prothonotary-filings@blairco.org
 - Each document filed shall be transmitted as a .pdf attachment. Scanned signatures will be accepted as originals. Each filing e-mail shall be copied to all person(s) to whom service copies would ordinarily be sent via mail.
 - The requirement for the immediate payment of filing fees will be suspended for all filings completed by email. The filing fee shall be due and payable upon invoice.
 - Due to the increase of printing, a fee of 25 cents per page shall be added to the invoice.
 - All filings received by email after 4:00 pm shall be time stamped for the following business day.
- Litigants in civil matters may be directed by the Court to participate in proceedings via ACT. The method most used by the court is BlueJeans video; participation by phone or email is at the discretion of the court.
 - Counsel and/or litigants shall provide their own means of participating via ACT, whether by computer, videoconference by telephone, or telephone via voice call.
 - Failure to provide means of participating via ACT shall result in continuance.
- All exhibits in an ACT proceeding must be transmitted via email to court administration for distribution to the appropriate chambers and opposing counsel no later than noon 5 business days before the proceeding.
 - Acceptable formats are .pdf, .jpg, .png, and .mp4; all Microsoft Office documents should be converted to .pdf unless specific formatting or metadata is a relevant part of the exhibit.
 - No other file types or transmittal methods will be accepted without prior approval.
 - Filenames should include the docket number and a brief, objective description of the item (e.g., "xxx-2020 Texts from Defendant").
 - Counsel or litigants may petition the court to provide exhibits in another manner if they are so voluminous they cannot be transmitted as described, or if they are tangible objects.
- Individuals shall be required to maintain appropriate social distancing, wear protective face masks and must comply with all safety guidelines issued by the Court and Staff.
- Only necessary and authorized individuals will be allowed entry to any court facility to minimize person-to-person contact. Members of the public, including the media, are permitted to observe court proceedings. Other than media representatives, any person wishing to observe a court proceeding must contact the Court Administrator's Office one (1) business day prior to the proceeding.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – BRADFORD COUNTY

- **Judicial Emergency extended through January 31, 2021.**
- Courts are open for all court business subject to protocols that limit in-person access and proceedings.
- ACT shall be used for all proceedings in the Court of Common Pleas and the Magisterial District unless the presiding judge determines otherwise. Statewide rules that restrict the use of such are suspended.
- Proceedings requiring in-person appearances shall be conducted in a manner that employs appropriate social distancing and all other safety measures consistent with federal and state executive guidance.
- Any in-person proceeding that cannot be conducted safely in the discretion of the presiding judge shall be postponed to a future date when safety measures can be so employed.
- Court filings shall be made by means other than in-person delivery whenever possible. Pleadings shall be made by mail or email (subject to page limitations and subsequent filing fees and paper cost invoicing) to the appropriate filing office and will be accepted as an original filing. Statewide rules impeding court filings by means other than in-person delivery are suspended.

- Access by the public to the Courthouse shall be limited to a number of individuals facilitating the 6-foot distancing and percentage capacities recommended by the CDC.
- All court users and public entering the Courthouse are required to wear a mask
- Court users and the public are requested to conduct business with the court by telephone, mail, email or any other ACT whenever possible to avoid in-person contact with Courthouse personnel.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – BUCKS COUNTY

- **Judicial Emergency extended through March 31, 2021.**
- All Court operations shall continue and all Court offices and agencies will remain open.
- ACT shall be used to conduct proceedings whenever practicable.
- Any proceeding deemed by the Court or Court Administrator to be non-emergency may be continued in the sole discretion of the Court or Court Administrator pending expiration of the judicial emergency or further order of court.
- All visitors are required to wear a protective face mask or covering, maintain social distancing, and comply with any other Court safety directives.
- **All jury trials, whether criminal or civil in nature and without regard to the number of jurors required, are suspended through March 31, 2021.**
- **All compulsory arbitration proceedings are suspended through March 31, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – BUTLER COUNTY

- All persons entering the courthouse should have a mask and be prepared to wear it if requested to do so.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CAMBRIA COUNTY

- All persons entering Court Facilities will be temperature checked at the entrance. Individuals with temperatures of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will be denied access.
- All members of the public are required to wear facial covering over the nose and mouth except for children under two (2) and individuals who cannot wear a mask due to a documented medical condition.
- Social distancing and other mitigation strategies recommended by the CDC and the DOH shall be observed.
- All persons seeking access to a Court Facility may be subject to questioning as is necessary to determine if the person: has been diagnosed with COVID-19; presents symptoms associated with COVID-19; or in, the previous 14 days, has been in contact with any person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Only persons with essential court business are guaranteed admission into Court Facilities, subject to the above restrictions. Sheriff's Deputies shall have the authority to limit the number of persons entering or remaining in a Court Facility at any given time to ensure public safety.
- Use of all courtrooms shall resume with occupancy limited to 35 % capacity and social distancing practiced.
- The use of ACT shall continue to be the preferred method of conducting proceedings, within constitutional limitations, unless the presiding judge deems otherwise.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CAMERON / ELK COUNTIES

- **Judicial Emergency extended to February 27, 2021.**
- All court facilities are open to conduct all court business, however public access shall be limited.
- **Jury trials suspended through February 8, 2021.**
- Anyone entering a court facility shall be required to wear a face covering that adequately covers an individual's mouth and nose in accordance with the Department of Health's Order regarding universal face coverings. Individuals who are entering a court facility to participate in a legal proceeding should wear an appropriate face covering that maintains the dignity and respect of the court.
- Anyone entering a court facility shall maintain proper and appropriate social distancing.
- ACT participation shall be the primary and preferred method of conducting court proceedings to the extent available, possible and practical; otherwise, such judicial proceedings shall be continued and rescheduled after January 15, 2021.
- Unless expressly authorized, no in-person judicial proceedings shall occur through January 15, 2021.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CARBON COUNTY

- Judicial emergency ended effective December 31, 2021.
- The Courts are generally open to conduct court business, subject to the limitations and restrictions herein.
- A limited number of jury trials are being held at this time, consistent with the prevailing health and safety norms, including the need to maintain social distancing.
- For in-person proceedings and hearings, all persons will be required to wear masks during the proceeding (unless a medical condition of which the court has been informed prevents the wearing of a mask and the presiding judicial officer excuses this requirement) and social distancing of at least 6 feet will be enforced.
- Excluding those proceedings involving a right to public and press access, no non-essential visitors, including children, shall be permitted to be present at such proceedings. Nor shall anyone be permitted to attend in person who has been directed to quarantine, isolate or self-monitor at home for COVID-19 by a doctor, hospital or health agency, or anyone who has been diagnosed with or has had close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or anyone who exhibits flu-like symptoms.
- The use of ACT to conduct court proceedings within constitutional limits is encouraged.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CENTRE COUNTY

- **Limited judicial emergency extended to April 30, 2021.**
- All common Pleas and Magisterial District Court judges are authorized and encouraged to continue to use ACT when reasonably possible and practicable.
- The Prothonotary's office will continue to accept filings by e-filing, by regular mail and by in-person filing.
- Only necessary and authorized individuals will be allowed entry to any court facility to minimize person-to-person contact.
- **Civil and criminal jury trials are suspended until further notice.**
- **The Courthouse and MDJ offices are closed for all non-emergency matters through January 10, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CHESTER COUNTY

- All coronavirus related safety precautions and protocols shall remain in effect. This includes social distancing, the wearing of masks while in the Justice Center and the courts, staggered court proceedings and use of ACT when appropriate.
- Everyone entering the Justice Center must wear a mask and have their temperature taken.
- Social distancing must be practiced at all times.
- Attendance at hearings is encouraged to be limited to essential participants.
- Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or with a known recent exposure to COVID-19 will not be permitted to enter the Justice Center or the Courts.
- **Jury trials are scheduled to resume February 16, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CLARION COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended to December 31, 2020.
- All jury selection and jury trials are canceled and will be rescheduled after the termination of the judicial emergency.
- Only parties, witnesses, and attorneys are permitted to be present in courtrooms or hearing rooms. No other individuals will be permitted unless expressly authorized by the presiding judge and when social distancing can be exercised.
- At the option of the presiding judge or upon request of counsel or a party, court proceedings may be conducted via ACT.
- All individuals present in court facilities shall wear cloth face coverings and practice social distancing. Face coverings may be removed with permission of the presiding judge when individuals are testifying or addressing the court.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CLEARFIELD COUNTY

- None; judicial emergency ended June 1, 2021.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CLINTON COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through March 7, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – COLUMBIA / MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

- **Judicial Emergency extended through June 30, 2021.**
- **Jury trials are suspended until April 30, 2021.**
- Social distancing, use of masks, sanitizing procedures, and other directives and suggestions of the CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health shall continue during the local judicial emergency.
- Statewide rules that restrict, directly or indirectly, the use of ACT are suspended.
- Procedures to limit gatherings of large groups and ACT procedures developed during the judicial emergency shall continue during the local judicial emergency when possible and practical.
- ACT shall be used as frequently as possible except in those proceedings where a person has a constitutional or statutory right to be physically present.
- Statewide rules that impede local provisions for court filings by means other than in-person delivery are suspended. The Prothonotary/Clerk of Courts shall accept filings (a) in the traditional manner or (b) via electronic means, e.g., email or fax, with hard copies to follow, filing effective at time of email or fax.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CRAWFORD COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended indefinitely.
- Civil court proceedings and all other judicial business operations will resume.
- All visitors to the Judicial Center will be required to possess and wear a mask unless excused by the Court. Masks will only be provided to those who do not have adequate time to obtain a mask prior to a scheduled court proceeding. All others appearing without a mask will be turned away.
- All occupants of the Judicial Center, shall, at all times, comply with the following general precautions:
 - Maintain social distancing;
 - Wear a mask, unless excused by the Court;
 - Answer questioning necessary to determine if the person presents with COVID-19 symptoms, has been in contact with persons known to have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or was present at a location deemed by the CDC to be a hotspot of COVID-19 contagion within the previous 14 days
- Filings may be made by mail or in person. The Prothonotary will also accept in place of original filings, and mark as recorded during regular business hours, documents in PDF format (15 MB max) emailed to eamett@co.crawford.pa.us, copy to acrawford@co.crawford.pa.us, as well as facsimiles - 814-337-5416.
- Any and all associated fees will be billed to the filer.
- **The January 2021 Term of Criminal Court and the February 2021 Civil Term of Court are canceled.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – CUMBERLAND COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through March 31, 2021.**
- All filings shall be by mail (or electronically where available) except emergency matters (in person).
- The courts are open to the public subject to the following conditions and limitations.
- All judges and hearing officers, when reasonably possible, shall do the following:
 - Utilize and encourage telephonic, video/audio devices and other ACT to reduce in-person hearings, trials, conferences, and similar proceedings or gatherings;
 - Stagger court appearance times to reduce crowding;
 - Limit meetings, conferences and other gatherings to essential participants and arrange seating to avoid close personal contact;
 - Liberally grant requests for continuances;
 - Enforce social distancing (if a hearing or proceeding requires too many participants and social distancing is impractical, it shall be continued to a date after the Judicial Emergency);
 - Require all witnesses in civil proceedings, other than litigants, to testify by phone or ACT.
- Witnesses, other than parties, in civil proceedings shall testify electronically, including by phone or video.
- All individuals entering any judicial facility shall observe social distancing and wear an appropriate face covering unless given permission (or requested) by the judge or officer to remove it during the proceeding.
- E-signatures of judges, attorneys, and litigants accepted until further notice.
- Common Pleas judges, magisterial district judges, and hearing officers have broad discretion to schedule, continue, and conduct hearings, trials, and other proceedings.
- **The call of the Civil Trial List scheduled for January 19, 2021 is cancelled.**
- **Civil Pretrials scheduled for February 3, 2021 are cancelled.**
- **Civil Jury Trials scheduled for the week of February 15, 2021 are rescheduled to the week of May 24, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – DAUPHIN COUNTY

- All civil and Orphans' Court filings shall be made by mail.
- **Jury trials are currently scheduled to recommence on March 8, 2021, however the jury trial scheduled to begin on February 10, 2021 shall proceed.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – DELAWARE COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through January 31, 2021.**
- **All criminal and civil jury trials remain suspended until further notice.**
- In person arbitration hearings resumed as of July 13, 2020.
- Generally, only parties and counsel shall be permitted in the courthouse. All witnesses must wait in his or her vehicle until the lawyer tells the witness to enter the courthouse. Witnesses must exit the courthouse immediately on the conclusion of his or her testimony.
- All individuals must first undergo a COVID-19 health assessment, including the taking of temperatures, and comply with any federal and/or state directives in place to stem the spread, including wearing a mask.
- Hearings, including arguments, contested pre-trial evidentiary hearings and/or non-jury trials will be scheduled at the discretion of the assigned civil judge.
- Assigned and/or presiding civil judges may schedule pretrial and case conferences as appropriate.
- All cases currently and subsequently referred for mediation before the Honorable Charles B. Burr, II (retired) will be listed and/or rescheduled consistent with retired Judge Burr's calendar and prior Orders.
- All parties must meaningfully engage in good faith discovery consistent with trial court orders or directives, including but not limited to depositions conducted to the extent practicable via some manner ACT.
- The Delaware County Court system was the victim of a cyber-attack in November 2020, and the system is not yet fully operational.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – ERIE COUNTY

- Emergency protocols remain in effect through January 4, 2021.
- All Court facilities shall remain open to the public subject to the restrictions below.
- Any individuals shall comply with the guidelines set forth in the Department of Health Order requiring universal face coverings dated November 17, 2020.
- No in-person hearings shall occur except certain exempt and emergency proceedings. All proceedings that can be conducted remotely via ACT shall proceed as scheduled. Non-exempt proceedings that cannot be conducted via ACT, shall be postponed to a date certain after January 4, 2021.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – FAYETTE COUNTY

- Judicial Emergency extended to January 4, 2021.
- For proceedings that must be held in person, appropriate safety measures will be employed.
- Anyone entering the court shall wear a mask and comply with safety measures consistent with the current federal and state guidance associated with countering the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- Attorneys are encouraged to attend in-person hearings with only their client and any necessary witnesses.
- Attorneys should advise the presiding judge when matters can be decided on the papers.
- Communications to judges' chambers and the office of the Court Administrator shall be by telephone, mail, email, or fax and not in person. Documents should continue to be mailed for filing.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – FORREST /WARREN COUNTIES

- For filing purposes, counsel shall use the mail and if necessary due to time constraints may file via facsimile (Warren County (814) 728-3459; Forest County 814-755-7957) or by email to the Prothonotary/Clerk of Court at Warren: jphillips@warren-county.net or Forest: rntkach@co.forest.pa.us with payment of filing fee to follow.
- In addition to filing with the Prothonotary/Clerk of Court, all motions requiring immediate attention should also be sent to the Court Administrator by email at lcritzer@warren-county.net.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – FRANKLIN / FULTON COUNTIES

- **Judicial emergency extended through April 30, 2021.**
- The courts are open, and all cases are authorized to be heard on every docket by the assigned judge, subject to the following restrictions:
- There shall never be more than 50 % occupancy in a courtroom or in the alternative, no more persons shall be permitted in a court room that would prevent on a square footage basis all occupants to practice social distancing of 6 feet, whichever is the lesser occupancy rate.
- All judges, hearing officers and masters may continue the use of ACT to conduct proceedings where possible, especially in the Civil, Orphans' Court/Juvenile and Domestic Relations dockets.
- Counsel or parties may continue to file pleadings in an electronic form with the Prothonotary and Clerk of Courts, even though "e-filing" systems are not yet in place.
- **Civil jury trials are to resume March 8, 2021 in Franklin County.**
- **Civil jury trials are to resume April 26, 2021 in Fulton County.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – GREENE COUNTY

- The Greene County Courts and its supporting Departments will be fully open to conduct all Court business.
- All "in-person access and proceedings" shall be subject to the recommended, but discretionary safety consideration of wearing a facial mask, and the reasonable constraint of maintaining a social distance of at least 6 feet between individuals.
- All Judicial Offices are encouraged to use ACT when and as determined to be appropriate, by the presiding judge, and/or the Office of District Court Administration.
- All employees and members of the public accessing any Court facility are subject to the mandatory wearing of a facial mask and a social distance of at least 6 feet.
- **The scheduling of jury trials is suspended until January 31, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – HUNTINGDON COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended to March 31, 2021.**
- **All jury trials are suspended until March 31, 2020.**
- Proceedings shall be conducted exclusively in remote formats using ACT through December 31, 2020. Appearance via ACT is mandatory for all participants unless excepted by the Court.
- All filings with the Prothonotary that would ordinarily be required to be made either in person or via U.S. Mail may be made via e-mail at the following address: prothonotary-orders@huntingdoncounty.com.
- If counsel for a litigant (or a litigant, if pro se) believes that the in-person appearance of a party is necessary, such that the proceeding cannot be conducted via ACT, then counsel may file a petition regarding their objection to the conduct of the proceeding via ACT, giving the detailed reasons for the objection and their proposed alternative. (The court has issued specific ACT instructions for attorneys, participants, witnesses, and using Zoom in general)
- All exhibits to be considered by the Court must be transmitted via e-mail to Court Administration (ctadmin.orders@huntingdoncounty.net) and the Director of Judicial Operations (ssnare@huntingdoncounty.net), with copy to opposing counsel (or the opposing party, if a pro se litigant) no later than noon on the business day immediately preceding the date of the proceeding. Acceptable formats are .pdf, .jpg, .png, and .mp4, unless specific formatting or metadata is a relevant part of the exhibit. No other file types or transmittal methods will be accepted without prior approval. Filenames should include the short-form docket number and a brief, objective description of the item.
- All jury trials cancelled or continued shall be rescheduled by the district court administrator.
- Expanded and mandatory use of act for conducting proceedings will continue, per the prior administrative orders issued under the emergency declaration.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – INDIANA COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended until further notice.**
- The Courthouse is closed to the general public.
- **Jury selection scheduled on or before February 22, 2021 is cancelled.**
- Proceedings in the Court of Common Pleas shall be conducted by ACT. In-person hearings shall be held at the discretion of the Presiding Judge. Attendance shall be limited to counsel, parties, and witnesses.
- Counsel shall be permitted to file documents by email or regular mail.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – JUNIATA / PERRY COUNTIES

- Effective June 1, 2020, Juniata County Government facilities will be open to the public by pre-arranged appointment only.
- Effective June 2, 2020 all CDC guidelines will be followed; social distancing guidelines will be followed; mask and/or face coverings will be required.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – LACKAWANNA COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through February 28, 2021.**
- **Jury trials are suspended through February 28, 2021.**
- All in-person access and proceedings may be limited at the discretion of the assigned judge
- The continued use of ACT for all court proceedings is highly encouraged and all statewide rules that restrict, directly or indirectly, the use of ACT remain suspended
- Effective September 8, 2020, Civil, Family, Orphans, and Discovery Motions which would normally be presented in Motion court are to be submitted electronically:
 - Civil Motions: civilmotion@lackawannacounty.org
 - Discovery Motions: discoverymotion@lackawannacounty.org
- The Motions must be submitted in PDF format and each submission shall state if the motion is stipulated to, contested, or opposed. All notice requirements remain in effect and each motion shall include a certificate of service, and list email addresses and phone numbers for all counsel or parties.
- Application to Suspend or Modify Pa.R.C.P. No. 221 (regarding the number of peremptory challenges permitted in civil matters) was granted on November 4, 2020 as follows:
 - The presiding judge is to announce the intent to reduce or eliminate the number of peremptory challenges at the beginning of voir dire; such announcement shall specify the number of peremptory challenges the parties will be permitted to exercise
 - The presiding judge is to memorialize via written order any reduction or elimination of the number of peremptory challenges
 - The reduction or elimination of the number of peremptory challenges shall be effectuated in a manner designed to achieve fairness among or between parties.
 - The Order shall remain in effect no longer than the duration of the judicial emergency

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – LANCASTER COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency is ongoing; emergency orders extended through February 28, 2021.**
- All filings shall be by mail (or electronically where available) except for emergency matters (in person).
- **Lancaster County Courthouse is closed to the public until February 12, 2021 except for certain emergency proceedings.**
- When a court reporter or other approved form of recording court proceedings is unavailable, alternative forms of recording shall be permitted.
- Alternative methods of signing, delivery and service of court documents and orders shall be permitted.
- Individuals entering any court facility shall be required to follow the Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for access to public buildings, including appropriate social distancing, wearing protective face masks in common areas, and complying with all safety directives provided by the Court or County staff.
- Anyone requesting an exemption from the requirement that face coverings be worn in public places should contact the Court ADA Coordinator no later than three (3) days before the scheduled event.
- **Civil jury trials scheduled through January 31, 2020 are continued generally. Non-jury trials may be scheduled with the permission of the President Judge.**
- **Time limitations for the initiation of any action or filing of any pleading or document applicable by statute, rule of court, or court order for all filings are extended until February 15, 2021. Any filing required by statute, court order, or other order of court prior to that date shall be considered timely filed if filed on or before the close of business on February 15, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – LAWRENCE COUNTY

- **Judicial Emergency extended to February 8, 2021.**
- **No jury trials shall be conducted during the January 2021 Trial Term. Any cases scheduled during that term are administratively continued to the trial term commencing February 8, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – LEBANON COUNTY

- Filings may be made via mail, email or fax. Email and/or fax filings will need to be followed by the original document (with original signatures) via mail and include the appropriate filing fee if any. Filings submitted by email or fax will be time stamped upon receipt and preserve filing dates provided originals are received.
- All persons must wear a face mask or other covering while on the third floor of the Municipal Building or in the Domestic Relations Office.
- All members of the public must abide by the CDC recommendations for social distancing.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – LEHIGH COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through February 28, 2021.**
- All proceedings shall be conducted by ACT if practical, notwithstanding any general order of court to the contrary and subject to constitutional limitations.
- All in-person proceedings shall be limited to no more than 25 persons in the Common Pleas.
- All civil proceedings, including preliminary objections, motions for judgment on the pleadings, discovery and post-trial motions, in which a party is a healthcare professional, para-professional or institution directly providing screening, diagnosis, treatment or care for anyone suspected of having or having COVID-19 remain stayed through February 28, 2021.
- To the extent possible, the CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines, including wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing shall be followed.
- **Civil Division jury trials are suspended through February 28, 2021, to a new date to be determined.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – LUZERNE COUNTY

- All individuals entering any Court facility shall comply with CDC guidelines and/or directives of the sheriff.
- All individuals entering any Court facility shall wear a face covering.
- No one other than the litigants, counsel and witnesses will be permitted to attend a hearing.
- Litigants, counsel and witnesses are to arrive ten (10) minutes prior to their scheduled court proceeding.
- ACT will be used when possible and practical.
- Admission to courtrooms will be based upon physical/social distancing requirements as provided by the CDC guidelines and/or directives of the sheriff.
- The Court of Common Pleas will be open for “Essential Services” only
- Pending further Order, only those proceedings which directly impact the health, safety, security, welfare, or incarceration of an individual shall be held as normally scheduled. All in-person proceedings shall be postponed to a later date.
- **All jury trials are postponed through January 31, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – LYCOMING COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through January 31, 2021.**
- In-person court proceedings and access will be limited for health and safety.
- Any statewide rules that restrict, directly or indirectly, the use of ACT are suspended.
- To the extent possible, Courts will decide matters on the papers and conduct proceedings utilizing ACT.
- It is strongly encouraged that documents be filed via U.S. mail.
- Generally, only necessary participants will be allowed in courtrooms and hearing rooms to minimize person-to-person contact. Participants will wear a facemask and practice social distancing in all areas of the Courts, unless the presiding judge authorizes otherwise.
- All visitors, including contractors and vendors, will wear a facemask and practice social distancing.
- Until further notice, all persons entering Court facilities will wear facemasks and practice social distancing.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – MCKEAN COUNTY

- After January 1, 2021, the court will use ACT as well as small in-person panels for jury selection.
- No in-person proceedings shall be held until at least January 1, 2021.
- Proceedings shall be held via ACT. If an in-person proceeding is required, it shall be continued until after January 1, 2021.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – MERCER COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended through December 31, 2020.
- The Mercer County Court of Common Pleas will be open for all business subject to the following.
- All persons shall wear masks, practice social distancing, use hand sanitizer, and take all other precautions.
- Courts will continue to use ACT to the greatest extent possible subject to constitutional requirements.
- All Common Pleas Judges shall have the authority to limit the number of persons present at any one time in their courtrooms subject to constitutional rights.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – MIFFLIN COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through March 31, 2021.**

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – MONROE COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended through June 30, 2021.**
- Any rule that restricts, directly or indirectly, the use of ACT in court proceedings is suspended.
- Any rules that impede court filings by means other than in person delivery are suspended.
- All jury trials are suspended until further Order.
- All persons shall wear face coverings and maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet at all times.
- Litigants will only be permitted in the facility 10 minutes or less prior to a scheduled proceeding. Counsel shall speak with their clients outside prior to the proceeding. Witnesses will be called in as needed.
- ACT will be used when possible and practicable. In person appearances will continue to be limited to the matters currently being heard pursuant to the emergency orders or as ordered by the Presiding Judge.
- Unless otherwise directed by a specific Order of Court, documents/exhibits for use in all types of proceedings must be emailed to the presiding Judge/Master/Hearing Officer or Conciliator to an address provided by the Presiding Judge or Court Administration. Exhibits must be provided at the time of the proceedings in an electronic format with a copy to opposing counsel/party.
- Pleadings shall be filed through the U.S. Mail or electronically. The Monroe County Prothonotary is authorized to accept filings by email, with pleadings attached as PDF documents, one pleading per email.
- Pleadings shall be signed, comply with all local and state rules and sent to protcivilfiling@monroepa.gov.
- Filing fees shall be payable to the filing office and sent by first class mail within 7 days of filing to the filing office at 610 Monroe Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360.
- Court Administration will process new pleadings, including new scheduling orders, pursuant to local rule.
- Bench trials shall be held using ACT as practicable except in limited emergent circumstances.
- Arbitrations will continue using ACT. Praecipes must include a phone and email for attorneys and pro se litigants. Court Administration will assist the arbitrators in scheduling and using ACT.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – MONTGOMERY COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended until further notice.
- Common Pleas and Magisterial District Courts are open to conduct business.
- Common Pleas Court Filing Offices (Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, Clerk of the Orphans' Court) are open to conduct all court business, except for in-person filing. Filings will continue to be accepted on-line, by mail or at the drop-box at the Courthouse entrance.
- Local Civil Rule 4012 (Depositions, Place of Taking) remains suspended until further Order of Court.
- Individuals permitted access to any court facility will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing, wear protective face masks and comply with all safety directives provided by the Court or County staff.
- Any civil cases commenced on or after January 1, 2019 are temporarily exempted from Local Rule of Civil Procedure *200 – Trial Readiness.
- All Case Management Orders previously issued on any civil cases commenced on or after January 1, 2019 where the case has not yet been placed in the Arbitration Inventory or Civil Trial Inventory are hereby **revoked**.
- All Motions for Extraordinary Relief pending in civil cases commenced on or after January 1, 2019 are **denied as moot**.
- Civil cases commenced prior to January 1, 2019 shall continue to be subject to Local Rule 200 and any Case Management Orders issued thereunder shall remain in effect.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended to June 30, 2021.**
- Uncontested motions and agreed-upon, stipulated orders shall be submitted by mail to the Office of Court Administration (jgreene@nccpa.org) and will be signed by the President Judge.
- *With the exception of jury trials*, once a case is assigned to a Judge for disposition, the assigned judge may conduct the trial, hearing, or conference **either** in person, with Polycom video conferencing, or with Skype for Business video conferencing.
- All individuals who enter any courtroom or court facility shall wear a mask which covers the mouth and nose, pursuant to CDC guidelines, and shall maintain a distance of at least six feet from any other individual while in the court facility.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

- **Safety precautions for access to the courthouse shall remain in effect until January 31, 2021.**
- Statewide rules that restrict, directly or indirectly, the use of ACT are suspended; therefore, the Court and related entities are hereby authorized to utilize communication technology to conduct Court proceedings
- Rules that impede local provision for court filings by means other than in-person delivery are suspended.
- Jury trials are suspended through January 2021 but may be held in February 2021.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

- To the extent practicable, parties shall engage in discovery consistent with governing scheduling orders. This includes all forms of discovery practice including depositions. No party shall use the current health crisis for advantage in the discovery process.
- To the extent practicable, depositions should be conducted remotely through telephone or videoconference. Court reporters need not be present in the same location as witnesses and/or counsel.
- Civil trial division will use Zoom as the designated ACT for certain proceedings in civil matters.
- **Civil non-jury trials** scheduled for trial subsequent to September 6, 2020 shall be heard by use of ACT.
- All **civil jury trials** scheduled through January 4, 2021, are postponed and will be rescheduled by the Court.
- Counsel may agree to have their case heard by a Judge sitting without a jury. Counsel should file a Stipulation of record and contact the assigned Team Leader who will schedule the Non-Jury case for trial.
- **In-person jury trials are scheduled to resume March 1, 2021.**
- All pretrial conferences will be conducted via ACT.
- Subsequent to December 7, 2020, the Court will be scheduling non-jury trials in the Arbitration Appeal and Major Non-Jury programs via remote technology.
- Protocol for Arbitration Hearings:
 - All matters that were scheduled for Arbitration Hearing between June and September 2020 will be scheduled for a settlement conference with an Arbitration Judge Pro Tempore (AJPT). A case assigned to an AJPT that cannot be settled will receive a new Arbitration hearing date.
 - All matters scheduled for Arbitration Hearing between October 2020 and the end of the year will be placed in a “pool program”.
 - Cases currently listed for Arbitration between October 2020 and the end of the year will be considered “ready to try” and are subject to a relisting for a virtual hearing during the month of their current hearing date.
 - A new Notice of Arbitration will be sent to all counsel or parties for those cases selected for a “pool” hearing date. Thereafter, a Scheduling Order will be issued for all cases listed for a remote hearing.

- Protocol for Discovery Motions
 - The movant shall file an appropriate Praeceptum within 20 days of the date of filing the motion.
 - The Praeceptum will designate the motion as withdrawn or entered by agreement, uncontested, against a third party (by agreement or uncontested only), or contested (including those against third parties)
- Protocol for Contested Discovery Motions:
 - All discovery motions for which a Praeceptum for Contested Discovery Motion and response thereto have been filed with the Court will be assigned to a Judicial Team Leader for adjudication.
 - Oral argument will be at the Court's discretion and done by phone or ACT.
 - Prior to the hearing, the movant may file the appropriate praecipe and advise the Court via email by peter.divon@courts.phila.gov that the motion can be submitted by agreement or uncontested.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – PIKE COUNTY

- None; judicial emergency ended June 1, 2020.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – POTTER COUNTY

- For filing purposes, counsel shall use the mail. Where exigent circumstances exist, counsel may file via facsimile or by email to the Prothonotary (kschroeder@pottercountypa.net), with payment of filing fee to follow. In addition to filing with the Prothonotary, all motions requiring immediate attention should also be sent to the Court Administrator by email at jsaulter@pottercountypa.net.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended to March 8, 2021.**
- All persons shall be required to wear a face mask or covering while in the courtrooms, hallways and other common areas.
- All proceedings, to the extent reasonably possible, shall be conducted through the utilization of ACT
- Everyone shall submit to a non-invasive temperature check when entering the court facilities, and no one shall be admitted without wearing a protective face covering, unless a child under two years old or an individual who cannot wear the face covering due to a medical condition.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – SNYDER / UNION COUNTIES

- Judicial Emergency extended until further notice.
- Any person attending a court proceeding in any courtroom, shall wear a mask or other facial covering.
- All courts shall continue to use ACT for court proceedings, when possible, consistent with state and federal constitutional requirements.
- The court strongly recommends that documents be filed by US mail.
- Until further notice, safety measures will be implemented for in-person proceedings, including:
 - Only necessary participants will be allowed entry into courtrooms and hearing rooms
 - Participants will wear a face mask and practice physical distancing

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – SOMERSET COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended until further notice.
- All Somerset County Government Buildings will be open to the public.
- Members of the public are to conduct routine business over the phone, on-line and by mail, if possible.
- The Magisterial District Offices are requiring individuals to sign-in at the front desk and then return to their vehicles or wait outside until it is time for their hearing.
- All persons entering Court facilities shall comply with the Pennsylvania Department of Health Order regarding universal mask wearing, issued on November 17, 2020.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – SULLIVAN / WYOMING COUNTIES

- County government offices will be open to the public by appointment only beginning November 30, 2020.
- Beginning May 11, 2020, the Sullivan County Courthouse will shift from “condensed” operations to a fully operational status with monitored public access. This new status will continue until further notice.
- Public entrance to the courthouse is permitted without appointment.
- Visitors are encouraged to continue making appointments with County offices prior to arriving.
- Visitors must wear their own face covering and may be subject to a temperature screening.
- Access may be denied due to an elevated temperature (100.4 and higher).
- Visitor counts will be monitored to ensure the building occupancy does not exceed 50% of the standard occupancy rate (per DOH standards). Visitors will be asked to wait until the occupancy rate lowers.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

- The Susquehanna County Prothonotary accept legal filings via email to jkrupinski@susqco.com provided that the filing does not require a filing fee. Any filing requiring a filing fee will be accepted via United States Postal Service, other priority mail delivery service or drop box located in the lobby of the Susquehanna County Courthouse, together with appropriate filing fee payment.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – TIOGA COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended through December 31, 2020.
- Filing shall be by mail; if necessary, due to time constraints, it can be via facsimile to the Prothonotary at 570-724-2986. The original filing and fees shall immediately follow. In addition, all motions requiring immediate attention shall be sent to the District Court Administrator by email at rway@tiogacountypa.us.
- Effective May 8, 2020 County facilities will reopen to the public by appointment only.
- A health check of all staff and visitors entering County facilities will be conducted.
- All staff and visitors are required to wear cloth face coverings while in County facilities.
- Visitors are encouraged to access services remotely where possible.
- Safety measures including but not limited to the following will be implemented for in-person proceedings until further notice:
 - Only necessary participants will be allowed entry into courtrooms and hearing rooms
 - Participants will wear a face mask and practice physical distancing
- All jury trials previously scheduled shall be rescheduled after December 31, 2020.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – VENANGO COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended until further notice.
- Individuals shall be required to follow CDC guidelines, including appropriate social distancing, wearing protective face masks, and complying with all safety directives provided by the presiding Judge. Anyone requesting an exemption due to medical reasons should contact the Court ADA Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than 3 days before the scheduled event.
- Contested Motions will be argued by telephone or scheduled to a date certain.
- The Sheriff shall monitor and turn away individuals exhibiting or describing COVID-19 symptoms.
- ACT shall be used when feasible. Any rule that restricts the use of ACT is suspended.
- Any rule impeding court filings by means other than in-person delivery is suspended. Court filings by fax or email to the appropriate office will continue to be acceptable.
- The Court's attempt to schedule jury trials and the assignment of trial dates is suspended.
- Potential jury selection dates and trial dates are canceled for the month of December 2020.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – WASHINGTON COUNTY

- **Judicial emergency extended to March 31, 2021.**
- Regular motions practice may resume at the discretion of the president common pleas judge.
- Rules that restrict the use of ACT are suspended for the duration of the judicial emergency.
- All individuals shall comply with the following, or be denied access and/or removed:
 - Submit to a temperature check and screening. No individual may enter a judicial facility with a fever of over 100 degrees, or if exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19 are indicated;
 - Wear an appropriate mask or face covering that fits snugly around the face and leaves unexposed the nose and mouth of the individual, unless the individual has a documented medical condition or is 3 years of age or younger.
 - Comply with social distancing guidelines, as well as any signage posted in or on judicial facilities or instructions from a judge, judicial officer, the district court administrator, deputy sheriff, constable at a magisterial district court, or court employee.
- Only participants are guaranteed entry into any court facility.
- Capacity in any courtroom shall not exceed 25% while maintaining more than 6 feet between participants
- Participants in court proceedings are to be denied entry until no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of their proceeding.
- All individuals entering a judicial facility shall submit to a temperature check and shall comply with the order of the Department of Health requiring universal face coverings dated November 17, 2020.
- All non-essential proceedings and conferences are to be held using ACT (primarily Microsoft Teams or Polycom) Statewide rules that restrict, directly or indirectly, the use of ACT are suspended.
- If an essential matter can be held using ACT, judges should do so.
- Common Pleas judges shall conduct Motions Court remotely using ACT.
- Argument court for civil cases shall be conducted remotely using ACT.
- **All jury trials are cancelled through January 31, 2021.**
- Arbitration hearings shall be conducted using ACT (Microsoft Teams).

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – WAYNE COUNTY

- Judicial emergency extended until January 31, 2021.
- The January 2021 trial term is canceled. All matters will be individually rescheduled.
- Motions Court remains canceled through January 31, 2021.
- Court facilities will be open to the public for essential functions only.
- The Court of Common Pleas shall conduct all proceedings, where practicable, using ACT.
- Any exhibits to be presented shall be emailed to the Court and opposing counsel one day before the scheduled hearing.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – WESTMORELAND COUNTY

- Limited judicial emergency reinstated until February 1, 2021.
- Civil Motions Practice will resume on Friday, May 15, 2020, subject to the following practices:
 - UNCONTESTED MOTIONS shall be presented to the chambers of the assigned Judge for signature. Submission of motions can be accomplished by fax, email or mail.
 - For CONTESTED motions, the Moving Party is to call the chambers of the Judge assigned to the matter and request a scheduled time to present the motion on a Friday. The Moving Party shall advise whether appearance will be in person or remotely and advise the Defending Party that he or she may appear in person or remotely. It is the attorney's responsibility to make arrangements with the Court to appear remotely, including providing a telephone number to the Court.
 - Four (4) days before the scheduled time, the Moving Party shall provide a copy of the Motion and any Proposed Order to the opposing party and to the Court.
 - Defending Party must advise the Court if he or she will be appearing remotely.
 - If counsel chooses to appear in person, then only the person or attorney presenting or defending the motion shall appear and wear their own mask in the courtroom. Gloves are recommended.
- All criminal and civil jury trials will be suspended until February 1, 2021.

PENNSYLVANIA COURTS OF COMMON PLEAS – YORK COUNTY

- Follows the Order applicable to all courts and all counties as discussed above, plus the following:
 - Judicial emergency extended through March 31, 2021.
 - In person access and proceedings are limited in the interests of health and safety.
 - All persons must wear face masks at all times in all areas of the building directly accessible to members of the public and in the presence of jurors.
 - Jury trials are suspended through February 12, 2021.
-

FEDERAL COURTS – THIRD CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS

- The Court of Appeals is open and operational.
- Oral arguments will go forward as scheduled. The merits panel will determine the manner of argument. The Court is currently holding in person argument and using Zoom for Government and audioconferencing for remote appearances. Parties may file a motion requesting to appear remotely.
- Parties may request to appear by audio-conference by filing a motion. If a panel determines that argument should be presented telephonically, the Clerk's Office will provide audio-conference instructions. Recordings of oral arguments will be made available on the Courts website within 24 hours.
- Parties may request extensions of time either by motion or by calling the Clerk's Office at 215-597-2995 and selecting the case management team.
- Counsel should continue to submit case filings through the Court's CM/ECF system; filings can still be submitted through the mail.
- Counsel and pro se litigants who need to file a new original proceeding, such as a Petition for Review, a Petition for Writ of Mandamus or Prohibition, or a Motion for Leave to File a Second or Successive Habeas Petition may file through CM/ECF or may send the documents in PDF format to the Clerk for filing via email addressed to emergency_motions@ca3.uscourts.gov.
- Litigants who cannot file through the Court's CM/ECF system may also submit documents for filing in PDF format by email addressed to emergency_motions@ca3.uscourts.gov. Please include the appeal number in the subject line of the email.
- The deferral of filing paper copies of briefs and appendices expired on October 1, 2020.

FEDERAL COURTS – EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

- This Court remains open for business in all Court locations, subject to limitations.
- The restrictions set forth in Local Civil Rule 5.1.2, subsection 2(b), stating that initial papers in civil cases cannot be electronically filed by counsel are suspended. All registered users of the Court's Electronic Case Filing (ECF) system are **required** to electronically file any case-related documents that can be filed electronically through the ECF system, including complaints in civil cases, notices of removal, and petitions for writs of habeas corpus.
- Any document that cannot be electronically filed should be emailed to the following address: paed_documents@paed.uscourts.gov, indicating the case number and the title of the document or pleading in the subject line.
- All visitors to the James A. Byrne U.S. Courthouse in Philadelphia and the Edward N. Cahn U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building in Allentown shall be required to wear a mask or face covering that covers the wearer's nose and mouth when entering the building and when in common or public areas of the Courthouse. Visitors are expected to supply their own mask or face covering.
- Any visitor seeking entry without a mask or face covering will be provided a mask by the Court.
- **All civil jury selections and jury trials scheduled on or before February 15, 2021 are continued pending further Court order.**
- All arbitration trials pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2 are CONTINUED pending further Court order. However, arbitration trials may be conducted remotely by videoconference. Parties must either consent or decline to have the arbitration trial conducted remotely by videoconference by completing and electronically filing a Consent/Declination of Consent form in each case awaiting an arbitration trial. For those cases in which the parties consent, the arbitration will be scheduled upon receipt of the forms on a rolling basis. Within one day of the entry of the Court's order scheduling the arbitration, the parties must send the arbitration clerk a copy of the docket sheet and all relevant time-stamped pleadings by email. A Standing Procedural Order for Arbitration Trials Conducted by Videoconference and the Guidelines for Participating in Arbitration Trials Conducted by Videoconference are available [here](#).
- Until further notice, access to courthouses and other Court locations in this district is limited to judges, Court personnel, and persons attending court proceedings or having other official business with the Court.

- Persons otherwise authorized to enter are, nonetheless, prohibited from entering if: (1) because of exposure to COVID-19 or travel to a country or region with an outbreak of COVID-19, they have been advised to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital, or health agency; (2) they reside with or have had close contact with someone who has been advised to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital, or health agency; (3) they have been diagnosed with, or have had known contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with, COVID-19; or (4) they are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness such as fever, severe cough, or shortness of breath.

FEDERAL COURTS – MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

- On November 30, 2020, the Middle District of Pennsylvania reentered Phase One of the COVID-19 Recovery Guidelines.
- In-Court proceedings include hearings with a handful of participants, settlement conferences, mediations, and face-to-face meetings. The number of participants will be governed by how many people can safely fit in the assigned space while maintaining compliance with the Court’s mask and social distancing protocols.
- The main components of Phase One are:
 - Limited in-court proceedings. **All bench and jury trials, petty offence docket, in-person settlement conferences, and mediations will not be permitted.**
 - Observance of CDC-compliant cleaning procedures in between limited in-court proceedings.
 - Strict social distancing and geographic isolation.
 - Maximum flexibility with telework.
 - Chambers staffing at the discretion of judicial officers, subject to restrictions for high-risk or vulnerable individuals.
 - Strict observance of best practices regarding hygiene, self-monitoring, social distancing, and wearing of face coverings/masks.
- In-person attendance requirements for mediations (M.D. Pa Local Rule 16.8.7) and Settlement Conferences (M.D. Pa Local Rule 16.9.4) are waived.
- Requests to participate in mediations and settlement conferences telephonically or by other electronic means shall be granted liberally by the judge or mediator assigned to conduct the proceeding.
- All civil jury selections and jury trials scheduled to begin on or before **February 1, 2021** are continued pending further Order of Court.

FEDERAL COURTS – WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

- This Court, and the courthouses in Pittsburgh, Johnstown, and Erie, will be open for official business, subject to the following provisions.
- All civil jury selections and jury trials scheduled to begin (or are to be scheduled to begin) on or before **February 8, 2021** are continued pending further Order of the Court.
- All trial-specific or other deadlines remain in effect unless modified by further Order of the Court or assigned judicial officer. Judicial officers will continue to apply the principles of flexibility and accommodation to reasonable requests for filing or scheduling adjustments necessitated by reasonable fact-based travel, health or safety concerns or directives of public health officials.
- Individual judicial officers may hold hearings, conferences, and bench trials in the exercise of their sound discretion, consistent with the principles of this Order and the other Administrative Orders of this Court, and after such reasonable consultation with counsel as they may deem appropriate.
- All judicial officers are encouraged to continue to conduct proceedings by telephone or video conferencing wherever in their judgment doing so is practicable in a given case and on terms as permitted by law, and to take reasonable measures to avoid the necessity of out-of-town travel (especially by public conveyance) of any litigant, counsel or the public.

FEDERAL COURTS – DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

- All in-person judicial proceedings are suspended through **January 31, 2021**.
- Standing orders re: face masks/coverings, social distancing, and temperature screenings remain in place.
- Judges shall continue to conduct proceedings via teleconference and videoconference, either remotely or from the courthouse. In-person proceedings should be limited to emergent matters and extend only to pleas and limited sentencing.
- Public access to the Clerk's Office will continue to be limited to filings via the drop-box, written correspondence and telephone calls and filings via ECF or help desk emails.
- Judges will continue to conduct court proceedings via video or teleconference, in almost all instances. For in-person emergency hearings and proceedings, the designated courtroom will continue to be used, with proper protection provided by plexiglass and increased cleaning.

NEW JERSEY STATE COURTS

- Virtual civil jury trials will resume in eight (8) counties on **February 1, 2021**. Initial trials will require *consent of both parties* and have limited witnesses and issues in dispute. The eight counties are: Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem, Monmouth, Passaic, and Union.
- Virtual civil jury trials will resume *statewide* on or after **April 5, 2021**; consent will not be required at that time. Thereafter, virtual civil jury trials will continue as long as necessary based on the pandemic. More information on the Order authorizing remove civil jury trials can be found [here](#). The Directive on electronic evidence in virtual civil jury trials can be found [here](#).
- The relaxation of Rule 1:6-4 is continued so as to eliminate the requirement of courtesy copies if the total submission does not exceed 35 pages in civil matters.
- To the extent practicable, depositions may be conducted remotely using necessary and available video technology, with court reporters authorized in those circumstances to administer and accept oaths remotely. Consistent with public health guidance, depositions also may be conducted in person with social distancing and other appropriate precautions.
- The relaxation of Rule 4:4-4(a)(7) so as to permit electronic service of process by email on the State of New Jersey is continued.
- The provisions of Rule 1:32-2A(c) and all other Court Rules requiring original signatures on filings are relaxed and supplemented.
- Requests for extension of time in individual cases, based on specific circumstances, may continue to be submitted by letter in lieu of formal motion.
- The court in any individual matter consistent with Rule 1:1-2(a) may suspend proceedings, extend discovery or other deadlines, or otherwise accommodate the legitimate needs of the parties, attorneys, and other interests of justice.

As always, we are available to discuss your questions or concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Fowler Hirtzel McNulty & Spaulding, LLP

COVID-19 Resource Team

Jacqueline E. Campbell, Esquire
jcampbell@fhmslaw.com
215-789-4844

Matthew D. Vodzak, Esquire
mvodzak@fhmslaw.com
267-603-6006

Zoe A. Otway
zotway@fhmslaw.com
215-570-3400

DISCLAIMER: The contents of this document are intended for informational purposes only. It is not intended as professional advice, legal advice, or the provision of legal services, and it should not be construed as such. The material presented herein is presented with the understanding and agreement that Fowler Hirtzel McNulty & Spaulding, LLP is not engaged in providing legal or other professional services by providing this material. The services of a competent professional should be sought if legal or other specific expert assistance is required. Any unauthorized use of material contained herein is at the user's risk. Transmission of the information and material herein is not intended to create, and receipt does not constitute, an agreement to create an attorney-client relationship with Fowler Hirtzel McNulty & Spaulding, LLP or any member thereof. Copyright © 2021 Fowler Hirtzel McNulty & Spaulding, LLP. All Rights Reserved.