

On March 16, 2020, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania **declared** a general, statewide judicial emergency until April 14, 2020, because of COVID-19. Pursuant to that order, President Judge Katherine B. Emery declared a **judicial emergency** in the 27th Judicial District from March 16, 2020, to April 14, 2020.

The **ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER** dated March 17, 2020, sets forth procedures for Court operations, which have been restricted to essential functions. Entrance to court facilities will continue to be **limited** to legal counsel, necessary participants, and individuals with a legitimate business need.

If you have questions about your case, please direct them first to your attorney. If you do not have an attorney, please contact the court or office that you are to appear before. All other inquiries should be directed to the Court Information Desk at (724) 228-6999.

Attorneys, litigants, and members of the public are urged to refrain from coming to any judicial facility unless necessary. To the extent possible, please contact the office first to determine whether business can be conducted by telephone, email, or other needs.

Washington County is closely monitoring all information from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Center for Disease Control, and local sources regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Information about the response can be found [here](#).

Anyone who is experiencing flulike signs or symptoms should contact their primary care physician (PCP). If you do not have a primary care physician (PCP), please call the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) at 877-PA HEALTH (1-877-724-3258). Please do not go to the hospital without contacting your PCP or PADOH first, unless you are in severe respiratory distress. If that is the case, please contact your hospital first before going there.

1. Preliminary arraignments, acceptance of bail; issuing arrest and search warrants, and all other functions pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Criminal Procedure 117; and
 - m. Any other matter determined to be an emergency by the Court.
2. All Court calendars, scheduling notices, subpoenas, or other court orders compelling the appearance of an attorney, litigant, or other participant in a case are cancelled for non-essential functions for the duration of time covered by the emergency declaration.
3. Regular motions practice shall be suspended for the duration of time covered by the emergency declaration; however, consented-to-motions may be sent to the chambers of the assigned Judge for his/her consideration.
4. All non-essential hearings and conferences are cancelled for the duration of time covered by the emergency declaration, with the exception of those that may be conducted by telephone or other remote technology. The staff of the assigned Judge will arrange those proceedings, after consultation with the parties.
5. Use of advanced communication technology to conduct court proceedings is specifically authorized, subject to constitutional requirements.
6. The District Court Administrator is authorized to:
 - a. Reassign judges or court personnel within the judicial district as needed to ensure the continuation of operations;
 - b. Change the duties and work hours of staff to handle matters consistent with this Order; and

c. Restrict, modify, reschedule, or cancel non-essential departmental operations.

This includes the scheduling of conferences and hearings before quasi-judicial officers.

7. Any local rule of procedure that conflicts with this Order is suspended for the duration of time covered by the emergency declaration, including time requirements and limitations and/or filing deadlines established by the local rules.
8. The Booking Center in the Family Court Center shall remain open absent further order of court.
9. All filing offices (Clerk of Court, Domestic Relations Section, Prothonotary, and Register of Wills) shall continue to be open for official business. The Court strongly encourages that business be conducted by mail, or other available means, rather than in person.
10. The Administrative Order dated March 16, 2020, restricting access to judicial facilities shall remain in full force and effect.

It is further ORDERED that all statewide procedural and administrative rules involving time calculations within the 27th Judicial District for the filing of documents with the Court or taking judicially mandated action be suspended for the period covered by the emergency declaration.

BY THE COURT:


_____, P.J.
PRESIDENT JUDGE KATHERINE B. EMERY

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
WESTERN DISTRICT**

IN RE: GENERAL STATEWIDE : No. 531 Judicial Administration Docket
JUDICIAL EMERGENCY :
: :
:

ORDER

PER CURIAM

AND NOW, this 16th day of March, 2020, pursuant to Rule of Judicial Administration 1952(A), this Court DECLARES a general, statewide judicial emergency until April 14, 2020, on account of COVID-19. The Court deems it necessary for the Pennsylvania Judiciary to consider -- on a district-by-district basis -- the appropriate measures to be taken to safeguard the health and safety of court personnel, court users, and members of the public.

1. Accordingly, President Judges are AUTHORIZED to declare judicial emergencies in their judicial districts through April 14, 2020, or for part of that period, should they deem it appropriate for the protection of the health and safety of court personnel, court users, and others. Local declarations shall be transmitted to the State Court Administrator on a form substantially similar to the attached. The declarations shall become effective immediately upon the State Court Administrator's transmittal to the Supreme Court Prothonotary and upon sufficient publication arranged by the President Judge. To constitute sufficient publication, the President Judge shall ensure that the declaration is:

- A. Posted on the entry doors of the county courthouse of the judicial district and of all magisterial district courts within the judicial district;
- B. Posted on the judicial district's website; and
- C. Transmitted via e-mail to the local county bar association or associations, with the request that such associations promptly forward the notice to all members.

2. Upon the declaration of a judicial emergency in a particular judicial district, the President Judge SHALL HAVE THE AUTHORITY:

- A. To suspend time calculations for the purposes of time computation relevant to court cases or other judicial business, as well as time deadlines, subject to constitutional restrictions;
- B. To authorize additional uses of advanced communication technology to conduct court proceedings, subject to constitutional restrictions; and
- C. To take any action permitted pursuant to Rule of Judicial Administration 1952(B)(2).

3. With reference to paragraph 2(A), the President Judge specifically SHALL HAVE THE AUTHORITY to suspend the operation of Rule of Criminal Procedure 600 within a judicial district. Such suspension shall be immediately effective if a statement of intention to implement a suspension is included in the declaration of a local judicial emergency. The purport of the suspension will be that the time period of the local judicial emergency (or a shorter time period if specified) shall be excluded from the time

computation under Rule of Criminal Procedure 600(C). Nothing in this Order or its local implementation shall affect a criminal defendant's right to a speedy trial under the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions, albeit that the circumstances giving rise to this Order and the suspension may be relevant to the constitutional analysis.

4. Within 24 hours of taking any action as authorized in Paragraph 2 of this order, the President Judge shall, to the extent practicable, provide notice of the action in the manner specified in Paragraph 1(A)-(C) of this order.

5. President Judges in judicial districts operating under a declaration of judicial emergency are to comply with the obligations under Rule of Judicial Administration 1952(B)(3), (B)(5), and any other pertinent provision, where implicated.

6. President Judges in judicial districts operating under a declaration of judicial emergency shall arrange for the provision of essential judicial services, including, by way of example, arraignments and bail establishment hearings, protection from abuse act proceedings, where absent such proceedings there would be a threat of domestic violence, and/or injunction proceedings, where absent such proceedings there would be the threat of irreparable harm.

7. To the extent a President Judge seeks the temporary suspension or modification of statewide court rules as applied to any case or cases in the judicial district, beyond that already permitted under this order, see Pa.R.J.A. 1952(B)(2)(m), the President Judge is to submit an application to such effect to the Supreme Court Prothonotary, with submissions being directed to the district office of the Prothonotary applicable to the President Judge's judicial district. Such applications shall specifically identify the rule or rules at issue and provide justification for the request. To the extent

practicable under the circumstances, notice of the request for suspension or modification of statewide court rules shall be provided in accordance with Paragraph 1(A)-(C) of this order, as well as Rule of Judicial Administration 1952(C)(5).

8. In judicial districts that operate under a declaration of judicial emergency, the President Judge shall provide notice in accordance with Paragraph 1(A)-(C), and to the State Court Administrator, when normal court operations are resumed. This notification shall be provided within 24 hours of the resumption of normal court operations.

A True Copy Patricia Nicola
As Of 03/16/2020


Attest:
Chief Clerk
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
WESTERN DISTRICT

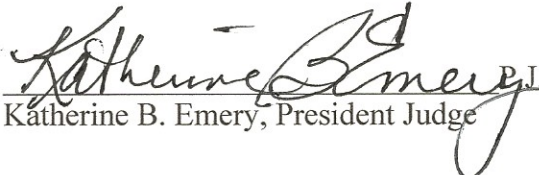
CIVIL DIVISION

IN RE: 27TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT)
DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY) No.: _____ M 2020
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DECLARATION

Per the Supreme Court's Order dated March 16, 2020, I declare a judicial emergency in the 27th Judicial District for the following period: March 17, 2020, to April 14, 2020.

The operation of Rule of Criminal Procedure 600 shall be suspended in the 27th Judicial District during the period of the local judicial emergency.


Katherine B. Emery, President Judge

Date: March 16, 2020