



## Notice to public regarding curtailed operations due to COVID-19

March 13, 2020

In consultation and agreement with other trial courts in the county, the Domestic Relations and Juvenile Court Judges have decided to postpone all non-essential, non-emergency hearings for the next four weeks. The intent of this action is to reduce the volume of persons entering our Court to help prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Emergency hearings and any hearing deemed time-sensitive by the individual Judge or Magistrate will be held as scheduled. Such hearings include preliminary hearings, ECOs, CPOs, bond hearings, and shelter care hearings. However, PCCs where the *children are stabilized in appropriate placement* will not automatically be considered “essential” unless otherwise so designated by the assigned Judge.

Judicial and magistrate staffs will be notifying affected parties today to inform them of the postponed hearings for the week of March 16<sup>th</sup>. For the weeks of March 23<sup>rd</sup>, March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 6<sup>th</sup>, judicial and magistrate staffs will complete continuance forms and parties will be notified in due time. Please be advised that service will not be affected (per Civil Rule 4); therefore, we will not ask any attorney or party to personally appear at the Court to sign a continuance. Parties who are uncertain of their next court date may call the Clerk’s office at 614-525-3600.

With respect to parenting time issues and the state-ordered school closures, parents who have shared parenting plans or custody orders should continue to follow those orders to the best of their abilities and in the spirit intended by the Court. Parties should adhere to all holiday and spring break schedules as designated by their schools at the beginning of the school year regardless of recent changes. They should follow the regular parenting schedule during all other times unless their orders specifically address school closures. The parties should also communicate about the location, health, and welfare of the children daily and should discuss travel plans and arrangements as required by their parenting plans or custody orders.

The changes outlined above will continue through April 10<sup>th</sup>, and we expect to return to normal operations on April 13, 2020. County judges and court administrators will be re-convening the week of April 6<sup>th</sup> to evaluate the current COVID-19 outbreak status and to ascertain whether any further extension of curtailed operations is warranted.