

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
AUGLAIZE COUNTY, OHIO**

**20 MISC \_\_\_\_\_**

**TEMPORARY ORDERS IN RESPONSE TO THE  
CORONAVIRUS PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

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Presiding Judge Frederick D. Pepple of the General Divisions and Administrative Judge Mark E. Spees of the Probate, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Divisions make the following findings with respect to the current Public Health Crisis associated with the COVID-19 Coronavirus:

1. A state of emergency in the United States of America has been declared by executive orders signed by President Donald J. Trump on March 13, 2020;
2. A state of emergency in the State of Ohio has been declared by executive orders signed by Governor Mike DeWine on March 9, 2020;
3. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic requiring urgent and aggressive action to control spread of the virus;
4. In the days since March 9, 2020, additional information has resulted in additional executive orders banning gatherings of over a certain size—which orders have lowered with each passing benchmark of additional cases being diagnosed in Ohio, closing schools, nursing homes, and then bars and restaurants, and impacting upon jails and prisons;
5. Members of the public at large, and specifically parties, witnesses, jurors and other participants in legal proceedings, are at risk for getting the virus, and spreading the virus, as it has been determined that carriers of the virus may infect others even before they are symptomatic.
6. The Court has an obligation to administer justice and maintain a functioning judicial system, while also having an obligation to protect first and foremost those who are in the courts' custody and other participants in judicial proceedings from this deadly disease.

Based upon these findings and the continuing constantly changing of circumstances with respect to this virus pandemic, this Court suspends the local rules of court to the extent necessary to meet this emergency, and adopts the following ORDERS forthwith:

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, THAT:**

1. The Uniform Local Rules of Court may be temporarily adapted to these circumstances to allow Court flexibility within Constitutional limits in response to the public health emergency.
2. The courts' security policies may be temporarily amended or supplemented to protect public health while maintaining essential court functions, including limitation of access to proceedings by those who are symptomatic or have been exposed to those who are symptomatic, and to take action to limit risks to participants.
3. Court operations and employee working conditions may be temporarily adjusted to maintain essential court functions.
4. The Courts may authorize FAX filing or other means of filing as approved within each division of the court.
5. The Courts may authorize the use of audiovisual devices and technologies for all actions and proceedings within the discretion of each judge.
6. The public health emergency may be considered to be a finding of good cause for continuances deemed necessary by assigned judges on a case-by-case basis, including within the meaning of R.C. 2945.72(B) or (H).
7. Conditions of supervision of all persons under the supervision of a probation officer may be temporarily amended within the discretion of each judge, and as that judge may direct to the probation officers serving the court, to minimize the risk to the probationers and others with whom they come in contact.
8. The Court will have the lawful authority, within Constitutional limits, to do and direct to be done all things necessary to ensure the orderly and efficient administration of justice for the duration of the declared public health emergency.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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**JUDGE FREDERICK D. PEPPL**

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**JUDGE MARK E. SPEES**