

FRANKLIN COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT
Court Administration
375 South High Street, 10th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4520
Telephone (614)645-8214
Fax (614)645-8822

Emily Shaw
Court Administrator

John Davenport
Deputy Court Administrator
Adrienne Patterson
Human Resources Director

March 13, 2020

For Immediate Release:

RE: Franklin County Municipal Court Operations During COVID-19 Pandemic

Governor DeWine has banned all gatherings of 100 people or more due to the coronavirus threat in an effort to prevent “community spread” of the virus. Currently, the ban does not include public buildings, office environments, or places where it is unusual for a large number of people to be within arm’s length of each other. However, the volume of people that the Franklin County Municipal Court serves on a daily basis warrants action on behalf of the Court.

The Franklin County Municipal Court will remain open and functioning as we deal with the impacts of the current COVID-19. We are working closely with our partner Courts, community leaders, and local health departments to ensure we are establishing protocols that will assist in minimizing the spread of COVID-19 while still offering essential court services. In light of the emerging pandemic, we are taking a number of actions to protect the public and our employees from Covid-19, to the best of our abilities.

Municipal Court arraignment sessions remain open. If a person has a summons to appear in traffic court or arraignment court, that person should make their scheduled appearance. For some of those cases a person may be able to enter a plea of “not guilty” online by accessing the website of Municipal Court Clerk Lori Tyack at <https://fcmcclerk.com>.

For those with criminal or traffic cases that have been assigned to a Judge and who are scheduled to appear in court on or after March 18th, those persons should not come to court. Those cases are being continued and a notice of the new court date will be sent to the address the court has on file.

Eviction court remains open. For evictions cases filed after March 13, 2020, the hearing will be changed to four weeks from the date of filing, rather than the two weeks that is the current standard.

Those who have scheduled weddings at the Courthouse are discouraged from having their weddings take place here during the next four weeks. If you wish to reschedule

the wedding, please call (614) 645-3889 to reschedule. If you wish to maintain your scheduled date, we will gladly accommodate your request.

Effective March 23rd, Municipal Court arraignments for defendants who are in custody will be conducted on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, rather than the normal Monday through Saturday schedule.

These plans will be in effect until April 20th. We will continue to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation and adapt to meet our community's need.

For emergency matters that need immediate attention, please contact the Judge assigned to your case or the Administrative and Presiding Judge, Judge Ted Barrows at (614) 645-7655.

As is the practice of the Court, we will continue to make every effort to minimize the number of prisoners in the county jail, to the extent that the safety of the community or the alleged victim, if any, is not jeopardized.

We are continuously assessing the situation to determine if additional precautions are necessary.

##