

CC: Lisa I. Swenski, Administrative Judge
Judge Sherry Glass
Judge Frank Janik
Jody Barilla, Court Administrator

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LORAIN COUNTY

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COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
TOM ORLANDO

JOURNAL ENTRY
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION
Lorain County, Ohio

Case No. 2021 MISC

In Re:

ORDER DECLARING A JUDICIAL
EMERGENCY AND CONTINUITY
OF OPERATIONS OF THE COURT
DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Date: 04/12/2021 Volume _____ Page _____

Due to the continued health emergency because of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and increasing numbers of confirmed cases and hospitalizations, the Court issues the following orders:

- (1) Consistent with the state orders to maintain social distance, and limit gatherings of people, and the state declaration that Lorain County is under a level 3 “red” “watchlist” public health advisory, the Domestic Relations Court will limit face-to-face Court business to mission-critical essential functions only, effective May 1, 2021, through May 28, 2021, to be re-evaluated at that time. Essential functions generally include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Ex-Parte Petitions for Domestic Violence Civil Protections Orders and review hearings;
 - b. Ex-Parte Petitions for Juvenile Protection Orders and review hearings;


- c. Ex-Parte Motions for Emergency Temporary Custody and review hearings;
 - d. Adjudication and Dispositional Hearings in Abuse/Neglect/Dependency Cases;
 - e. Shelter care hearings for Abuse/Neglect/Dependency Cases;
 - f. Juvenile Detention Matters;
 - g. Judicial Bypass of Consent Hearings;
 - h. Any hearings for Juveniles in detention; and
 - i. Any hearings for supervising Juveniles in detentions, Turning Point Shelter or Pathways Group Home.
- (2) The Court will evaluate all other types of “nonessential” hearings or meetings for participation through video or telephonic means, or in person if deemed necessary. The assigned Judge will have the discretion to continue or proceed with any “nonessential” matter by teleconference, video conference, other technological methods, or in person if deemed necessary. The Court will be notifying those who have hearings scheduled during this time frame regarding the status and mode of those hearings;
- (3) The Court authorizes the use of audio-visual devices and technologies for all actions and proceedings;
- (4) The Juvenile Clerk’s office will remain open to accept essential filings and payments. The Juvenile Clerk’s office accepts fax filings at (440) 329-5271, email filings at juvenileclerk@lcfct.org, and payments online; visit the Court website at loraincounty.com/domesticrelations. The Domestic Relations Clerk’s office accepts fax filings at (440) 329-5506 and payments online; visit the Clerk of Court’s website at loraincounty.us/clerk/ ;

- (5) This public health emergency may be considered a finding of “just cause” for continuances deemed necessary by assigned judges on a case-by-case basis;
- (6) The local rules of court for the Domestic and Juvenile Division may be temporarily adapted to allow court flexibility, within constitutional limits, in response to the public health emergency;
- (7) The Court’s security policies may be temporarily amended or supplemented to protect public health while maintaining essential court functions;
- (8) The Court’s Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook and other usual and customary human resource provisions may be temporarily adjusted to maintain essential court operations and functions;
- (9) 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;
- (10) All individuals, including Court judicial officers and personnel, desiring to enter the courthouse and appear in the domestic relations court must wear a face covering and may be subject to available health screening or testing, and may be excluded from admission based upon the refusal to wear a face covering unless medically excused or upon the results of such screening or testing;
- (11) Any Court employee who exhibits signs of illness must notify their direct supervisor by telephone or e-mail and shall not come into the courthouse or report for duty. Any individual within the courthouse who exhibits signs of illness shall be directed to leave the building immediately and seek medical advice before being permitted to re-enter the building at a later date;

- (12) The Court shall attempt to minimize the social interaction of litigants, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, law enforcement personnel, and judicial personnel and promote a safe court environment by following all Department of Health recommendations when conducting hearings in person including requiring face coverings, maintaining appropriate social distance, limiting the number of people gathered, and subjecting all people who appear in person to health screening to ensure proper/good health;
- (13) Employees of the Court not on duty in the courthouse shall work, to the extent possible, remotely, and in accordance with the directives of their department head and/or supervisor; and
- (14) When the emergency subsides, the Court will enter an order declaring an end to the emergency and a resumption of normal operations.
- (15) This Court order will be served upon the Lorain County Prosecutor's Office, the Lorain County Clerk of Courts, the Lorain County Common Pleas-General Division, the Lorain County Sheriff, the Lorain County Commissioners, and the Ohio Supreme Court, will be published on the website of this Court, and will be provided to the Lorain County Bar Association to be disseminated to the local bar.

It is so ordered.


Administrative Judge Lisa I. Swenski


Judge Sherry Glass


Judge Frank Janik