



**DATE:** March 30, 2020  
**TO:** Media Release  
**FROM:** Judges James, Hall and Nist  
**SUBJECT:** UPDATED Coronavirus (COVID 19) Precautions  
Effective March 24, 2020- April 30, 2020 when precautionary practices will be reassessed.

As a result of the Governor declaring a state of emergency related to the Coronavirus (COVID 19) and more recent "Stay at Home Order", the Stark County Court of Common Pleas, Family Court Division, is taking various precautions to assist in the containment of the virus and protect litigants and staff. **Stage II Operation Procedures and Precautions are hereby implemented.** These precautions are as follows:

- ☉ All **Juvenile** trials, hearings and proceedings in delinquency, juvenile traffic, civil, custody, abuse, neglect and dependency and adult criminal cases are suspended and continued until further order of the Court, except for a) **Initial Hearings for Detained Youth**; b) **Emergency Removal/ Shelter Care hearings**; c) **Ex Parte Orders in Civil Actions, which includes, but is not limited to, Protection Order Requests against a Minor**; d) **full hearings on Protection Order Requests**; e) **full hearings on Agency removal cases**; f) **Judicial Bypass hearings**; g) **Warrant pick-ups**. **Pre-trial and uncontested hearings may be conducted electronically.**
- ☉ All **Domestic Relations** trials, hearings and proceedings in divorce, dissolution, custody, show cause, and child support cases are suspended and continued until further order of the Court except the following types of hearings: a) **Ex Parte Orders in all Civil Actions, which includes, but is not limited to, Civil Protection Order Hearings**; b) **Full hearings on Civil Protection Order Requests**; c) **Warrant Pick Ups**. **Uncontested hearings, Dissolutions, and Pre-trial hearings may be heard electronically.**
- ☉ Attorneys are encouraged to work with their clients and one another to facilitate resolution of pending matters.
- ☉ As an exempt governmental service, the Court will continue to operate daily but with reduced staffing; most staff working from home. Judgment Entries will be reviewed daily. Telephone and e-mail messages will be monitored.
- ☉ Domestic Relations Temporary Orders will be issued on the basis of affidavits and according to Civil Rule 75(N). Requests for oral hearings will be conducted electronically.
- ☉ Requests for video or phone conferencing should be made in advance of the hearing to the assigned judge.\*
- ☉ Parties are not to bring friends or family members to hearings unless they are required to testify in a trial or are serving as a victim advocate or another person providing support to the victim in a civil protection order case. Deputies may limit access to those who have legitimate business with the court.
- ☉ Visitation with detained youth will be restricted pursuant to institution/ attention center policy.

- 📞 Arraignments and Pre-trials for detained persons will be conducted by teleconference from the jail or detention.
- 📞 The Court's Supervised Visitation Program is suspended. Parties may contact the Supervised Visitation Program Coordinator for suggestions on alternative means of parent/child interaction.
- 📞 Home visits by court staff are suspended. Court staff will follow contact guidelines established by the Ohio Department of Health.
- 📞 The Court's Teen Court Diversion Program is suspended.

\*- Where possible and appropriate, appearances by electronic means such as skype, video or telephone are encouraged and may be required for hearings going forward. Counsel or self-represented litigants shall insure that the Court has the appropriate telephone number by contacting the judge's staff. The Court shall initiate the telephone call. The call will be made as close to the hearing time as possible, but may be later based upon the volume of calls being made. REMINDER: The call may show as "unknown caller" or "private caller", but please answer the calls. If you do not answer the call or are not available when called, the hearing will go forward without you.