

BUSINESS OF THE COURT:
PANDEMIC SAFETY PROTOCOLS
NOVEMBER 2, 2020

IN THE COURT OF COMMON
PLEAS FOR THE 26TH JUDICIAL
DISTRICT, COLUMBIA/MONTOUR
COUNTY BRANCH, PENNSYLVANIA
CIVIL ACTION - LAW

2020-MV-1

ORDER

Whereas, the CDC and the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health (hereinafter "Secretary") directed and/or have recommended that certain public health safety measures be followed by businesses and the public at large; and,

Whereas, this court was informed by email from the Pennsylvania State Court Administrator that the Governor's Office of General Counsel opined that "the order, which is directed to 'businesses,' does NOT apply to government entities, including courts. That said, many aspects of the order reflect best practices that government entities may want to adopt voluntarily"; and

Whereas, Columbia and Montour County governments are not bound by the Secretary's order and any CDC orders but have advised employees to voluntarily follow the order as closely as possible and have continued following procedures for cleaning and sanitizing facilities; and

Whereas, this court issued protocols for addressing pandemic related issues by order dated April 20, 2020, which need to be updated now particularly since many models are anticipating significant increases in Covid 19 infections, particularly in the next three (3) months; and

Whereas, the Judicial Emergency in the 26th Judicial District has been extended through December 31, 2020, and very likely will be extended through at least March 1, 2021; and

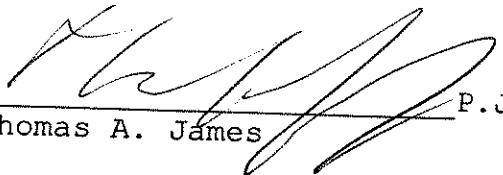
Whereas, the Courts of the 26th Judicial District of Pennsylvania (hereinafter "Court") acknowledge that public health measures to stem the pandemic should be followed by all citizens for the public good.

NOW, THEREFORE, this 2nd day of November 2020, it is ordered as follows:

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CLERK OF COURT
COUNTY OF MONTOUR
PENNSYLVANIA

1. The Courts and all Court personnel shall follow as closely as practical and as possible the protocols by the CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health.
2. The Courts of the 26th Judicial District shall continue to be open subject to safety protocols.
3. Masks shall be worn and social distancing observed during business hours performing court duties when feasible and in the interest of public health and safety.
4. Hearings and meetings shall continue to be telephonically and/or by videoconferencing where possible. If in-person hearings are necessary, the number of people attending shall be minimized and the attendees shall wear masks and be socially distanced, using common sense and good judgment.
5. Processes and procedures implemented by the judicial offices within the 26th Judicial District, as a result of the pandemic in March and April 2020, shall continue to be implemented and followed during the judicial emergency.
6. This order shall expire at the end of the Judicial Emergency in the 26th Judicial District.

BY THE COURT:


P.J.
Thomas A. James

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COUNTY OF PENNSYLVANIA