

JUDGE'S CHAMBERS
FIFTY-SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
BEDFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

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Memorandum

To: Common Pleas Judges, Magisterial District Judges,
Court Departments, Court Related Departments and
Court Staff

Cc: Bedford County Commissioners

From: Mary Wilt, Court Administrator *MW*

Date: March 16, 2020

Re: Public Health Emergency Response-Updated
(3/16/20 updates appear in bold)

Effective immediately, and until further notice, the 57th Judicial District has adopted the following policies and/or restrictions:

- Court Employees shall not attend off-site conferences or trainings;
- Court events/meetings (as distinguished from court hearings, conferences, etc.) shall be rescheduled or held virtually.

In addition to the above, and effectively immediately, the 57th Judicial District is implementing the following policies:

- Scheduling of larger court lists shall be staggered to avoid larger groups of litigants/attorneys in the courtrooms. Scheduling shall be adjusted as such beginning March 20th;

- A liberal continuance request policy shall be instituted with due consideration to health concerns;
- **Every effort shall be made to handle bench warrants the same business day. Court Administration shall coordinate with the Prison to expedite this process.**
- The Courtroom gallery in all courts shall be limited to litigants, witnesses, victims and support persons. Effective March 19th, capacity will be reduced to 1/3 of the standard capacity. Litigants and other persons may be asked to wait in alternative waiting areas until their case is called. Conference Rooms 110 and 111 and the room between Courtrooms 2 and 3 shall be designated waiting areas;
- Effective March 20th, increased video-conferencing shall be used, if practicable, for court hearings, conferences, etc.
- **The Courts have coordinated with the Sheriff's Office to limit inmate transports to 5 inmates at a time.**
- **Civil Motions may be handled via phone.**
- All MDJ Offices and Court-related departments shall implement similar strategies to minimize exposure (staggered scheduling recommendations, money processing policies, etc.) to be coordinated through MDJ Administration;
- Upon check-in at Central Court, defendants shall provide the Sheriff's Deputy with a cellphone number. Defendants are permitted to wait in alternative locations, including the outside courtyard, but must remain on campus and accessible.

These policies shall be updated and modified as circumstances warrant.