

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

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OFFICE OF THE  
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CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY IN THE 15TH JUDICIAL  
DISTRICT ON ACCOUNT OF COVID-19 ("CORONAVIRUS")

AMENDMENT TO ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 6-2020;  
SUPREME COURT DOCKET NO. 54 MM 2020

AND NOW, this 2nd day of April, 2020, in consideration of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's April 1, 2020 order extending through April 30, 2020 the statewide judicial emergency declared by that court in its order of March 16, 2020, and requiring all Pennsylvania courts to generally close to the public through April 30, 2020, as an extension of the time period described in its order of March 18, 2020, it is hereby **ORDERED** and **DECREED** that the March 19, 2020 Administrative Order No. 6-2020 of this court is amended as follows:

1. All Chester County courts of common pleas and magisterial district courts generally will be closed to the public for non-essential functions through April 30, 2020.<sup>1</sup>

**Common Pleas Courts**

2. All court calendars, scheduling notices, subpoenas or other court orders compelling the appearance of any attorney, litigant, or other participant in any non-essential case are hereby continued or postponed through April 30, 2020.
3. All jury and non-jury trials, both criminal and civil, are hereby canceled and suspended through April 30, 2020.
4. Unless otherwise required herein, or the assigned judge determines that such matters may be conducted through the use of advanced communication technology consistent with constitutional limitations, any in-person pretrial conference, case management conference, status conference, diversionary program, discovery motions practice, motions practice or other hearing, whether civil or criminal, is hereby postponed through April 30, 2020. In accordance with the assigned judges' authority, the assigned judge may handle any non-essential matter he or she deems appropriate, provided judicial personnel, attorneys and other individuals can and do act in conformity with orders issued by the Governor, and

<sup>1</sup> By future amendment(s), this court may extend all provisions herein which end on April 30, 2020 through May 31, 2020, in accordance with the Supreme Court's April 1, 2020 order.

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that persons, not otherwise permitted to enter the Chester County Justice Center, participate in such matters remotely by advanced communication technology.

5. All in-person visitation between children under the jurisdiction of the Dependency Court, and their families, shall be suspended through April 30, 2020. The Chester County Department of Children, Youth and Families shall make every effort to facilitate forms of visitation and contact between such children and their family members by alternate means, including but not limited to, video calls, telephone calls, electronic mail, letter writing and other advanced communication technology.

#### **Magisterial District Courts**

6. The essential functions for which the public will be permitted to enter the Chester County magisterial district courts, in addition to those described in the March 19, 2020 Administrative Order 6-2020, shall include preliminary hearings for incarcerated persons only, beginning on April 14, 2020.
7. Each Magisterial District judge may handle any non-essential matter he or she deems appropriate, provided judicial personnel, attorneys and other individuals can and do act in conformity with orders issued by the Governor, and that persons, not otherwise permitted to enter the magisterial district court, participate in such matters remotely by advanced communication technology.

(Essential functions for magisterial district courts do not include summary offense arrest processing. Magisterial district judges are directed not to participate in or authorize such summary offense arrests through April 30, 2020.)

8. Payments rendered to the magisterial district courts will not be made in person but may be accepted by mail or electronically (online), as may be permissible in the magisterial district court receiving the payment. In the event any scheduled payment is missed, or default of a payment plan previously imposed by the court occurs, the magisterial district court shall issue a hearing notice scheduling a payment determination hearing to be held after April 30, 2020. Such missed payment or default shall not result in the issuance of an arrest warrant for failure to make a payment, nor shall the non-payment result in driving privileges being suspended, prior to such hearing.

**General**

9. Through April 30, 2020, no officer, official, or other person employed by the Chester County court of common pleas or magisterial district courts shall effectuate an eviction, judgment, or other displacement from a residence based upon the failure to make a rent, loan, or other similar payment. Nothing herein is intended to preclude requests for orders of possession resulting from judgments entered in landlord-tenant actions to be filed by mail. However, any execution on an order of possession is hereby stayed through April 30, 2020.
10. All previously scheduled trials, hearings or other in-person appearances, not otherwise referenced herein, and which do not fall within the previously and herein defined essential functions, are hereby canceled and suspended through April 30, 2020, including any for the juvenile probation office, adult probation office, court reporters' office, and domestic relations office. Said offices shall use advanced communication technology to provide such canceled and suspended services if possible.
11. These additional modifications to the 15th Judicial District's functions supersede and replace any modifications described in any prior Administrative Orders issued in March of 2020, to the extent that there is a conflict between these modifications and those preceding modifications.
12. This Administrative Order is effective immediately.

BY THE COURT:

  
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JOHN L. HALL

P.J.