



**OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION
43RD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Date: March 13, 2020

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

Subject: Public Health Emergency Response - Courts

Dear Colleagues:

President Judge Patti-Worthington, in consultation with and approval of the Board of Judges, has authorized the distribution of this memo. Effective immediately, and until further notice, the Court has adopted the following policies and/or restrictions:

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

In addition to the above, the Court is implementing the following strategies immediately, and until further notice:

When possible use email and electronic mediums to create, file and transmit documents and Court Orders;

Limit the numbers of persons in chambers and other meeting/conference rooms to comply with social distancing recommendations;

- **The number of jurors summoned will be limited** to a maximum of 90. That number will accommodate 2 panels of 45- or one large panel per day- with jurors sitting in every other chair in either Courtroom “1” or

“3” with trial to commence immediately thereafter on a date certain. The Court's priority of panel policy will be followed.

- **Jury selection** - specifically general voir dire - shall take place in Courtroom "1" or “3” to accommodate more space for the prospective jurors during the selection process. This may require coordination among Judges- switching courtrooms for a day or a portion of a day;
- **Scheduling of larger court lists (ARRAIGNMENT, DUI, PTC, JUVENILE CALL, etc.) will be "staggered"** by the hour (9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., etc.) to avoid larger groups of litigants/attorneys in the courtrooms. Scheduling will be adjusted starting ASAP and no later than March 23 (by scheduling notice), and earlier by conversations with the DA/PD;
- **ARRAIGNMENTS**- Waivers of arraignment will be accepted up until and including the day scheduled for formal arraignment and orders generated for subsequent appearances. Defendants who execute and file such waivers need not attend Court on that day. Those who will be entering the ARD program or who will enter a Plea at that time must attend.
- **PRETRIAL CONFERENCES**– All defendants are excused from pretrial conferences in criminal and DUI court commencing March 18, 2020 except those who will be entering a plea.
- **NO PERSON IN CUSTODY** will be transported to the courthouse for any proceeding absent an order from the Court. All proceedings will be scheduled using advanced communication technology. If a waiver is required and not received, the Court will determine what action to take and the case may be continued.
- All Judges are directed to conduct **Gagnon and Parole Violation hearings for those in custody** by advanced communication technology;
- **Juvenile Court** will stagger scheduling, and is reviewing alternative scheduling options such as video and telephonic proceedings;
- **All MDJ Offices** will be directed to implement similar strategies to minimize exposure (staggered scheduling recommendations, money processing policies, etc.) to be coordinated through MDJ Court Administration;
- **DRO Establishment and Modification Conferences** (only) will be held by telephone, provided that the parties comply with document presentation requirements prior to the conference as required and in the manner determined by the Director of DRO.

By way of update, the following **safety measures** have been implemented throughout the Courthouse and MDJ Offices:

County maintenance/housekeeping is sanitizing all door handles, light switches, counters, elevators, handrails etc. in the Courthouse nightly per the Court's request;

- Sanitizer dispensers have been installed in the hallways near the elevators, and hand sanitizers have been placed in or near all courtrooms and hearing/ meeting rooms;

The Court continues to work with the County to obtain additional supplies for each Court and Court-related office and is assured that those supplies are forthcoming.

Thank you for your anticipated patience and cooperation in this new and emerging situation. Please be reminded that events are **very fluid and are subject to change** as additional information becomes available.



John J. Goldner
District Court Administrator

cc:
Judges
MDJ Court Administrator – Kathy Sauter
Deputy Court Administrator – Debra Rivera
Chief Probation Officer – Bernie Sikora
DRO Director – Rachel Van Horn
Board of Commissioners
AOPC Communications
Monroe County Bar Association
Magisterial District Judges