

Michael  
C. [unclear]

IN RE: MODIFICATIONS TO COURT : IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
FUNCTIONS DUE TO :  
COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH : LAWRENCE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
EMERGENCY :  
: NO. 90078 OF 2020, A.D.

ORDER OF COURT

AND NOW, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020, it is ORDERED and DECREED that the following policies and/or restrictions shall apply pending further order of court to permit the Judiciary of the 53rd Judicial District, Lawrence County, Court of Common Pleas to continue performing essential functions for the duration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency:

1. Court employees will not attend off-site conferences or trainings.
2. Court events and meetings, as distinguished from court hearings and conferences, will be rescheduled or held virtually.
3. The number of persons in chambers and other meeting or conference rooms shall be limited to comply with social distancing recommendations. Any common pleas court judge, magisterial district court judge, hearing officer or conference officer shall have the authority to determine the limit of the number of persons.
4. Scheduling and re-scheduling of larger court lists shall be staggered or scheduled in smaller numbers of cases to avoid larger groups of litigants and attorneys in the courtrooms.
5. Waivers of arraignment will be accepted up until and including the days scheduled for formal arraignment. Defendants who execute and file such waivers need not attend court on that day.

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6. Counsel may request that a defendant be excused from pretrial conferences in criminal proceedings if counsel deems defendant's attendance to be unnecessary.

7. All magisterial district court offices and Central Court shall implement similar strategies to minimize exposure, including staggered scheduling recommendations, with the District Court Administrator to be apprised of any strategies or policies developed by the district court judge.

8. Litigants shall be discouraged from bringing to any court proceeding individuals who are not necessary to the proceeding.

9. The number of individuals in the courtroom galley shall be limited to fifty percent (50%) of the capacity of that courtroom.

10. Relative to jury selection, the following guidelines shall apply:

- a. No more than one (1) jury panel shall be summoned on a given day.
- b. Unless approved by the President Judge, the number of jurors summoned for a given trial in any one day shall be limited to a maximum of seventy (70). No more than forty-five (45) prospective jurors shall be placed in any one room.
- c. Jurors will be instructed to comply with social distancing requirements including sitting in every other chair or allowing similar distance between each juror. Jury selection may require coordination between judges to utilize available courtrooms to achieve social distancing.

11. When reasonably possible, judges and litigants are encouraged to utilize, to the fullest extent available, telephonic, video/audio devices and other advanced communication



technology to reduce personal appearances for hearings, meetings, conferences and similar proceedings or gatherings.

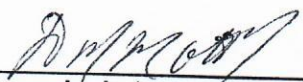
12. County maintenance shall continue its excellent policy of implementing safety measures to continue sanitizing all door handles, light switches, counters, elevators, handrails and other surfaces in the government center.

13. Court Administration is hereby authorized to take all measures necessary to ensure that the foregoing measures are implemented, with the specific objective to reduce the number of persons assembled in the Court areas to the fullest degree possible.

14. This Order is in effect immediately.

15. The Prothonotary shall exit a copy of this Order to the Board of Judges; all Magisterial District Court Judges; the District Attorney of Lawrence County; the Chief Public Defender of Lawrence County; the Executive Director of the Lawrence County Bar Association; the Lawrence County Board of Commissioners; the Lawrence County Controller, the Lawrence County Chief Executive; the Directors of the Offices of Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation, Domestic Relations Section, and Lawrence County Children and Youth Services; the District Court Administrator; the Director of Public Safety/911; the Prothonotary; the Central Court Administrator; and the Director of Maintenance.

BY THE COURT:

  
\_\_\_\_\_, P.J.  
Dominick Motto  
President Judge

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