

The Court of Common Pleas

Darke County, Ohio

Jonathan P. Hein, Judge

Courthouse, Greenville, Ohio 45331

(937) 547-7325 fax (937) 547-7323

commonpleas@co.darke.oh.us

March 17, 2020

Colleagues:

The Court has received inquiries about its expected operations while movement within the community continues to be restricted. I trust this email gives you sufficient details.

First, the Court will not close; the rights of the people to court access will be maintained. Regular business hours should be maintained though reduced staff at times is likely. Persons arrested will be afforded appearances; individuals requesting CPOs and CSPOs will be afforded hearings; contempt hearings should proceed; criminal pre-trials, pleas and sentencing should occur. The Court expects to continue to finalize cases and motions whenever possible in order to avoid delaying judicial matters.

However, you can expect to see changes in the manner by which cases are processed. Primarily, personal appearances will be significantly limited. Expect that court appearances will be handled through technology, such as telephone, videoconferencing and web-based methods.

Settlement conferences will likely be conducted by telephone or videoconference. You should plan to have your client in your presence or contemporaneously available so that decisions can be made. Uncontested or brief evidentiary hearings may be conducted in the same methods; the parties / witnesses will be sworn and testimony presented. Entries and Orders will be signed when available.

Regarding filing documents, presently the Clerk of Courts also expects to maintain regular hours. However, if the Clerk's Office would be closed or inaccessible, you will be permitted to fax or email pleadings to the Court (937-547-7323 or commonpleas@co.darke.oh.us). Their receipt will be date stamped when received during regular business hours. Thereafter, when permitted, the documents will be delivered to the Clerk, inserted into the file and noted on the docket.

How cases proceed will be decided on a case by case basis -- as occurs every day. Expect to receive a phone call or written notice about a week prior to a scheduled event about how each event will be handled. If you have concerns or input about a scheduled event, please continue to call the Court.

Obviously, circumstances are very fluid and these procedures may change. I will attempt to keep you advised as seems appropriate. Contact me if you desire since your input is helpful.

Jonathan P. Hein, Judge