

COMMON PLEAS COURT

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
GENERAL DIVISION  
LAWRENCE COUNTY, OHIO

2020 MAR 16 PM 3:30  
THE HARTSON  
CLERK OF COURTS  
LAWRENCE COUNTY

TEMPORARY ORDER IN RESPONSE TO  
COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY

JUDG. \_\_\_\_\_, PG. \_\_\_\_\_

On March 9, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine issued Executive Order 2020-01D "Declaring a State of Emergency" in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. In accordance with the proactive precautionary measures contemplated in the Executive Order, and the anticipated procedures that will be developed by various state and local governmental agencies to promote public health, safety and wellbeing, the General Division of the Court of Common Pleas has developed a continuum of flexible responses to ensure the business of Court will continue while, at the same time, restricting the public's need to physically access the Court.

Therefore, it is **HEREBY ORDERED**:


1. The Rules of Practice for the General Division may be temporarily modified, within Constitutional limits, to allow the Court to operate effectively during the State of Emergency;
2. The use of telephone conferencing and, if available, video conferencing is authorized in all actions and proceedings. If video conferencing is not available in cases where a criminal defendant's presence in Court is required, then the defendant and counsel shall appear in person;
3. Any matter that the Court determines to be time sensitive shall proceed as scheduled unless modified by the Court in accordance with paragraph 9 of this Order;

4. The Court will continue to accept petitions for civil stalking protection orders and temporary restraining orders;
5. All civil jury trials are suspended until April 6, 2020;
6. All criminal jury trials that are not time sensitive are suspended until April 6, 2020;
7. All Court appearances for the Nexus Recovery Docket are suspended until April 9, 2020;
8. All in-Court appearances shall be limited to counsel, Court staff, parties to the case, necessary witnesses and certain members of the media. Members of the public who do not fall into one of the categories set forth herein shall not be permitted to congregate in the second and third floor lobby areas of the Courthouse Annex, and may be prohibited from entering the Courthouse under the directive of the Lawrence County Board of Commissioners;
9. The public health emergency shall be considered to be a finding of good cause for continuances deemed necessary by assigned Judges on a case-by-case basis; and
10. The Court shall have lawful authority, within constitutional limits, to do and direct to be done all things necessary to ensure the orderly and efficient administration of justice for the duration of the declared public health emergency.

Case-by-case exceptions to the mandates set forth herein may be ordered at the discretion of the Court. Further, nothing in this Order shall affect the Court's consideration of civil or criminal motions that can be resolved without oral argument.

The General Division of the Lawrence County Court of Common Pleas shall remain open until further notice from the Court, but persons who have business before the Court are encouraged to utilize telephone, facsimile and email communication when possible in order to promote social distancing and limited physical contact.

It is SO ORDERED.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ANDREW P. BALLARD, JUDGE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHRISTEN N. FINLEY, JUDGE