

2020-0150R-CM

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURT'S FUNCTIONS DURING THE CHESTER
COUNTY TEMPORARY CORONAVIRUS POLICY

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 4-2020

AND NOW, this 12th day of March, 2020, after consultation on March 11, 2020 with the Chester County District Attorney, Court Administrator, Prothonotary, Register of Wills, Sheriff, First Deputy Public Defender, Clerk of Courts, Director of the Department of Computer and Information Services and County Administrator, and to better allow the common pleas judges, magisterial district judges and hearing officers of the 15th Judicial District to continue performing the Judicial District's essential functions for the duration of Chester County's temporary policy and guidelines addressing the coronavirus (last revised 3/11/2020), it is hereby **ORDERED** and **DECREED** as follows:

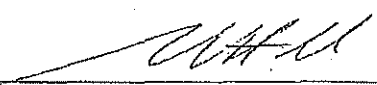
1. All the above judges and hearing officers, when reasonably possible, shall do the following:
 - a. utilize, and encourage litigants to utilize, to the fullest extent available, telephonic, video/audio devices and other advanced communication technology to reduce personal appearances for hearings, trials, meetings, conferences, and similar proceedings or gatherings;
 - b. stagger court appearance times to reduce crowding;
 - c. limit meetings, conferences and other gatherings to essential participants and arrange seating to avoid unnecessary close personal contact;

- d. develop the capability to work remotely from the court facility with assistance, if necessary, from the Chester County Department of Computer and Information Services.
 - e. For jury trials:
 - i. utilize at least one additional alternate;
 - ii. discuss with litigants the possibility of utilizing less than the maximum number of jurors possible in civil cases;
 - iii. use large Justice Center courtrooms 1 and 2 for jury selection in order to reduce juror crowding.
2. Other than the modifications described above, the judges and hearing officers shall schedule and conduct hearings and trials in essentially the same manner they were scheduled and conducted before the discovery of coronavirus.
3. The Chester County sheriff deputies and Chester County constables are hereby authorized and directed to decline transportation of prisoners from any prison/jail despite a valid transportation order if, using his or her reasonable discretion, the prisoner to be transported appears to be sick or may have recently (within the last 14 days) been in contact with someone who is positive for coronavirus. Any sheriff deputy or constable declining transportation on this basis shall immediately contact the appropriate judge/hearing officer involved in the subject case. The Chester County Sheriff and Chester County Court Administrator shall provide, if possible, handheld thermometers to transporting sheriff deputies and constables to assist them in determining if a prisoner is sick.
4. The Chester County Court Administrator shall do the following:

- a. arrange with the jury services personnel to limit, if possible, the jury lounge to only two of the three possible panels summoned and utilize a second large room, e.g., an accessible courtroom, for the third panel. Seating for prospective jurors shall be staggered, if possible, to reduce juror crowding and the jury services personnel nightly shall clean all surfaces which members of jury panels and staff might have contacted.

5. This Administrative Order is effective immediately.

BY THE COURT:



JOHN L. HALL

P.J.