

FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR TEMPORARY CLOSURES DUE TO COVID-19

Philadelphia, PA - Due to public health concerns related to COVID-19, and based on recommendations from local and national public health authorities - including the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania (FJD) has ordered, effective **March 17th, 2020**, that all FJD courts and related offices, will be closed until April 1st, 2020, or until further order from the court, with the following exceptions:

- A. Preliminary Arraignments, Bail Acceptance, and Emergency Protection from Abuse services will continue on a 24/7 basis. Non-Emergency Protection from Abuse petitions secured at Family Court will resume upon the reopening of our courts and offices.
- B. Juvenile Detention Hearings and shelter care hearings held pursuant to 42 Pa.C.S. § 6332 will be held by the Court as required under the law.
- C. An Emergency Judge will be available from 9am to 5pm and civil emergency filings must be filed in person at the Stout Center. We will designate the location. Civil Emergencies will be limited to health and medical emergencies, public safety and emergency guardianship appointments. During non-business hours, the court will continue to have a designated emergency judge available through the City Hall operator, as usual.
- D. All Pretrial Services and Adult Probation and Parole Department client interviews will be suspended for the next two weeks. GAGNON I Hearings and EMU Supervision will continue.
- E. Municipal Court will continue to hear video bench warrant hearings for individuals incarcerated in the Philadelphia Prison system.
- F. Traffic Division will remain open to retrieve impounded vehicles-3 days per week. We will update the Traffic Court IVR-call center appropriately.

Jury and non-jury trials, both criminal and civil, and preliminary hearings are suspended and will be rescheduled at a later date. Jurors DO NOT need to report for jury duty. All civil pre-trial conferences, case management conferences, diversion programs, discovery lists and trials are cancelled or postponed. All criminal trials, pretrial conferences, diversion programs are cancelled, pending further notice from the Court.

We have postponed sheriff sales scheduled in the month of March and we have suspended the issuance and enforcement of writs of possession. We had previously cancelled our Thursday Mortgage Conciliation Program, and our Tuesday and Wednesday Tax programs, as well as our Sequestration program.

Emergency petitions must be filed in person at the Stout Center, at a location to be determined shortly. Civil Emergencies will be limited to Health and medical emergencies, public safety and emergency guardianship appointments. During non-business hours, the court will continue as usual of having a designated emergency judge available through the City Hall operator.

We will be contacting parties who are scheduled to appear in court during this period to inform them of any scheduling changes.

FJD leadership will continue to re-evaluate all closures moving forward, and will alert the public to any changes to what is outlined above, as appropriate.

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