



**FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA COURT OF COMMON PLEAS**

Friday, July 16, 2021

**TRIAL DIVISION – CIVIL
NOTICE TO THE BAR**

**UPDATED PROTOCOL FOR THE
COMPULSORY ARBITRATION PROGRAM**

General Statement

Effective August 2, 2021, Compulsory Arbitration hearings will resume in-person at the Arbitration Center, 1880 JFK Boulevard, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19102. This is in accordance with Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas Administrative Docket No. 24 of 2021 issued July 2, 2021, found at <https://www.courts.phila.gov/pdf/regs/2021/24-of-2021-AD-ORDER.pdf>, which is consistent with the terms of the June 21, 2021, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Order, No. 553 Judicial Administration Docket, as well as, being in accordance with the health and safety guidelines, protocols, and recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control, Pennsylvania Department of Health, the City of Philadelphia Department of Health, and the First Judicial District.

Protocol for Arbitration Hearings

1. For the remainder of July 2021, all matters previously listed for a virtual hearing in the month of July will be conducted remotely. Parties have already received notice of the virtual hearing with the requisite Zoom link to “attend the hearing”. The Docket reads “**ARB REMOTE HEARING SCHEDULED**” if the matter is listed for a virtual hearing.
2. As noted in the General Statement, in-person arbitration hearings **will resume on August 2, 2021 at the Arbitration Center located at 1880 JFK Blvd, 5th Floor, Philadelphia PA 19103.** No virtual proceedings will occur after August 2, 2021. As the Arbitration hearing will be conducted in-person, all counsel, parties, witnesses and arbitrators must physically appear at the Arbitration Center.
3. All cases which had a “place holder” date for August and September of 2021, have received a new Notice for the same date and time as the “place holder” date to advise that the hearing is taking place in-person. Hearing dates for October 1, 2021 and going forward are no longer “place holder” dates and the cases will proceed on the dates and times listed on the docket.

4. For in-person attendance at the Arbitration Center, the following is required of counsel and any participants:
 - All unvaccinated persons shall wear a CDC compliant face mask that properly fits over the nose and mouth at all times when inside the Arbitration Center. Any persons who are fully vaccinated¹ are encouraged – but not required – to wear a face mask while inside the Arbitration Center.
 - Social distancing of at least 3 feet must be maintained while in the Arbitration Center.
 - After leaving the listing room to proceed to one of the Arbitration Center’s hearing rooms, traffic in only one direction will be permitted in the hallway. Once leaving a hearing room, participants must exit one of the two rear exits. **PARTICIPANTS CANNOT RETURN TO THE MAIN LISTING ROOM FROM THE HALLWAY.** If necessary, once exited, a participant can enter the listing room from the common area near the elevators.
 - Counsel and Self-Represented litigants are strongly encouraged to limit the number of people attending a hearing. Only counsel, parties, necessary witnesses, court reporters and interpreters should be in attendance.
5. Parties are required to review their cases listed for Arbitration on or after August 2, 2021 and advise the Arbitration Center immediately if the case settled or file a Continuance/Deferral Application for a matter not ready to proceed. An untimely filed Continuance Application can be denied on that basis alone.

Honorable Lisette Shirdan-Harris
Administrative Judge
Trial Division

Honorable Daniel J. Anders
Supervising Judge
Trial Division – Civil

¹ Persons are considered to be fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose in a two-dose vaccine (the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines), or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine (the Johnson & Johnson vaccine).