Trial Court Emergency Administrative Order 20-5
Modified Procedures Concerning Protection Orders as a Result COVID-19

Due to the extreme risk of person-to-person transmission caused by the 2019 novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), which has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, and which has occasioned the declaration of a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Order No. 591: Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19;

It is hereby ORDERED, pursuant to my authority as set forth in G.L. c. 211B, § 9, that, effective March 19, 2020:

Judicial response

Judges serving on judicial response issuing emergency protection orders pursuant to

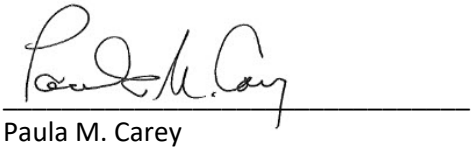
- G.L. c. 209A (abuse prevention orders);
- G.L. c. 258E (harassment prevention orders); or
- G.L. c. 140, §§ 131S or 131T (extreme risk protection orders/firearm surrender order)

after 4:30 p.m. and before 8:30 a.m. on weekdays, on weekends, and on legal holidays, may issue the *ex parte* order for up to ten (10) days for a telephonic hearing after notice, rather than make the order returnable to the court on the next day. All orders will be returnable at 9:00 a.m. on the return date, and parties should be instructed to call the court at that time. Courts may conduct the hearing at 9:00 a.m., or may schedule the hearing for a time convenient for the parties and for the court at a later time on the return date.

Notice to defendant of in-person hearing

Orders issued at a hearing after notice that were not heard in-person may be issued for periods consistent with the applicable statute. Defendants against whom orders are issued shall be provided with notice that they have a right to seek an in-person hearing on the issuance of order once the courts have resumed normal operations.

Dated: March 19, 2020



Paula M. Carey
Chief Justice of the Trial Court