NOTICE TO THE BAR

COVID-19 – Clarification of Four Provisions of the Supreme Court's April 24, 2020 Second Omnibus Order

The Supreme Court has entered an order clarifying four provisions of the Court's April 24, 2020 Second Omnibus Order regarding court operations during the COVID-19 crisis.

The May 15, 2020 Order, a copy of which is attached, clarifies the following aspects of remote court operations:

(1) The Office of Foreclosure will continue to review and recommend non-dispositive motions (e.g., motions to substitute plaintiff, motion to enter default, motion for surplus funds and motions to correct defendant), but will not recommend judgments or dispositive motions received on or after March 1, 2020 pending further court order;

(2) The suspension of the requirement of courtesy copies as already applied to Civil matters also extends to Family matrimonial (FM) matters, meaning that courtesy copies are not required so long as the total submission (including appendices and attachments) does not exceed 35 pages;

(3) The ongoing suspension of trial calendars in Special Civil (DC) and Small Claims (SC) does not prevent attempts to settle those matters or requests in an individual case to proceed to trial. Judges may conduct DC and SC trials remotely with the consent of all parties; and

(4) In addition to certified copies and exemplified copies, and other categories covered by the March 27, 2020 First Omnibus Order, electronic signatures are permitted for documents to which the seal of the court is affixed by the Superior Court Clerk (including but not limited to orders, Judgments of Conviction, Judgments of Divorce, Qualified Domestic Relations Orders, and writs of execution).

Questions on this notice should be directed to the Office of the Administrative Director at (609) 376-3000.

Hon. Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.
Administrative Director of the Courts

Dated: May 15, 2020

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, the Supreme Court has entered various orders, including the March 27, 2020 First Omnibus Order and the April 24, 2020 Second Omnibus Order, which addressed suspensions of certain proceedings, extensions of deadlines, and tolling periods for various areas. This order is intended to clarify aspects of the April 24, 2020 Order.

It is ORDERED that effective immediately, the April 24, 2020 Second Omnibus Order is amended as follows:

1. The Office of Foreclosure will not recommend judgments or dispositive motions received on or after March 1, 2020 pending further court order. The Office of Foreclosure will continue to review and recommend non-dispositive motions.
2. The relaxation and supplementation of Rule 1:6-4 as already applied to Civil matters is extended to Family matrimonial (FM) matters, and the requirement to submit courtesy copies in Family matrimonial (FM) matters is suspended so long as the total submission (including appendices and attachments) does not exceed 35 pages. When the submission is more than 35 pages, courtesy copies still must be mailed or delivered to the court and postmarked within two days of the electronic filing.

3. Special Civil Part (DC) and Small Claims (SC) trial calendars remain suspended through May 31, 2020. That provision does not prevent settlement negotiations, case management conferences, motions, and other proceedings to attempt to resolve DC and SC matters. If all parties consent, the court may conduct a virtual trial in a specific DC or SC case upon the parties' request.
4. The provisions of Rule 1:32-2A(c) and all other Court Rules requiring original signatures on filings are relaxed and supplemented so as to permit electronic signatures to be used temporarily in all filing processes during the COVID-19 crisis, including, in addition to those matters listed in the March 27, 2020 Order: (i) exemplified documents signed by the Superior Court Clerk in the virtual presence of a judge; (ii) certified documents; and (iii) documents to which the seal of the court is affixed by the Superior Court Clerk (including but not limited to orders, Judgments of Conviction, Judgments of Divorce, Qualified Domestic Relations Orders, and writs of execution).

5. Except as modified by this order, all provisions of the Court's April 24, 2020 Second Omnibus Order remain in effect.

For the Court,

Chief Justice

Dated: May 15, 2020