SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ORDER

By Order of the Chief Judge, the District of Columbia Superior Court is adjusting its operations to address concerns regarding the Coronavirus (COVID19). The court will make additional adjustments as circumstances warrant.

To the extent that a case type has not been identified below, all non-priority matters scheduled before May 1, 2020, will be rescheduled and new dates set; emergency matters will be heard as scheduled by the court and as set forth below. Any party may seek relief from these changes by filing a motion with the appropriate court.

Filings:

All Divisions and the Family Court will be open for filing of pleadings, motions and new cases with limited staff. Electronic filing will continue.

The following procedures are in effect through May 1, 2020:

Civil Division

Civil Division

- All trials scheduled on or before May 1, 2020 are continued – parties should not appear, and the court will set new dates and notify the parties.

- All evictions of tenants and foreclosed homeowners on or before May 1, 2020 are stayed.

- All court hearings in the following types of matters are continued – parties should not appear, and the court will set new dates and notify the parties:

    - Landlord and Tenant
    - Small Claims
    - Debt Collection
    - Mortgage Foreclosure
    - Tax Foreclosure
    - Housing Court

- Hearings in all other civil matters may be held only by telephone; if all parties and lawyers are not able to participate by telephone, the court will reschedule the hearing.

- All mediation sessions scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued and will be rescheduled or conducted telephonically.

- Judge in Chambers will be open to hear only emergency matters in all types of civil cases, including temporary restraining orders and emergency matters that would normally be assigned to calendars that are not holding hearings. All non-emergency matters in Judge in Chambers are continued, and the court will set new hearing dates and notify the parties.

Criminal Division

- Presentments, arraignments, preliminary hearings and detention hearings will proceed as scheduled.

- All jury trials in progress shall proceed as scheduled.

- All jury and nonjury trials with detained defendants scheduled between March 16 and March 27 shall be converted to a status hearing on the original trial date for purpose of selecting a new trial date. No new jurors are required to appear during this time (March 16-27).[1]

- All jury or nonjury trials with non-detained defendants scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued; parties need not appear; the court will set and notify of new date for status to select a new trial date.

- Drug Court and Mental Health Community Court cases shall proceed as scheduled.

- Extradition matters shall proceed as scheduled.

- Indictments returned by the grand jury shall be received as presented; all matters concerning appearance before the grand jury will be considered as presented.

---

1 Pursuant to D.C. Code §11-947(c), and upon consideration of the state of emergency in the District of Columbia as declared by Mayor Muriel Bowser on March 11, 2020 and the National Emergency as declared by President Donald J. Trump on March 13, 2020 in response to the pandemic of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the court will toll all statutory and Rule based time limits in Title 23 of the DC Code and the Superior Court Rules of Criminal Procedure for a period of 13 days from the date of this order, with the exception of SCR Crim. Rules 5.1, and 10 and D.C. Code Section 23-1322(a) and (b), governing the timing of presentment, arraignment, preliminary hearings and detention hearings. In doing so, the court has considered the ability of the United States and District of Columbia Government to investigate, litigate and process defendants, as well as the ability of criminal defendants to prepare their cases, during this emergency and finds such action to be in the best interest of the administration of justice. The tolling period may be further extended upon consideration and consent of the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration.

- Pretrial and Probation show cause hearings and motions to review bond or release conditions shall proceed as scheduled; counsel and pretrial or probation officers may appear telephonically if approved by the court.

- All other hearings for detained felony, misdemeanor and traffic cases will proceed as scheduled, counsel may appear telephonically if approved by the court, unless parties mutually agree to continue.

- All other hearings in non-detained felony, misdemeanor and traffic cases are continued; parties need not appear; the court will set and notify of new status date.

Domestic Violence Division

- Requests for Temporary Protection Orders will be available through the Emergency Temporary Protection Order Process. The Domestic Violence Division Clerk's Office will accept any other filings including requests to modify or vacate any order remotely through the Forms Help Online Platform (https://www.probono.net/dccourts).

- All hearings in Civil Protection Order (CPO) cases scheduled before May 1, 2020 will be continued; parties need not appear, the court will issue an order in each case extending the TPO or CPO and assigning the parties a new court date. Any existing Temporary Protection Orders and Civil Protection Orders will remain in effect and will be extended through May 1, 2020 or to the next assigned court date.

- All arraignments and detention hearings in Domestic Violence Misdemeanor (DVM) cases will be held as scheduled.

- All Criminal Domestic Violence (DVM and CCC) cases in which the defendant is detained will be held. Additionally, all pretrial show cause hearings and probation revocation proceedings will be held as scheduled.

- All other hearings in Criminal Domestic Violence (DVM and CCC) cases scheduled before May 1, 2020 will be continued; parties need not appear, the court will issue an order setting a new date. Any current orders, including Stay Away Orders, will remain in effect until the next Court date. The Domestic Violence Division Clerk's Office will accept any emergency motions or other filings through the E-filing process.

- The Domestic Violence Division Clerk's Office will be available remotely for any inquiries. Call (202)879-0157 or email domesticviolencemanagement@dcsc.gov with any questions. If you are in immediate danger call 911 or the SAFE Crisis Response Team at (800)407-5048.

Family Court

- Domestic Relations cases:

    - All trials and non-emergency motions hearings in Domestic Relations scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued – parties need not appear; the court will set and notify of new dates. The court will review new filings and motions and hear matters it determines are emergencies.

- Juvenile cases:

    - initial hearings will be held as scheduled and to the extent possible utilize remote capability for detained youth at the Youth Services Center.
    - trials with detained respondents will proceed as scheduled.
    - trials with non-detained respondents scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued – parties need not appear; the court will set and notify of new date.
    - hearings on Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus will proceed as scheduled.

- Non-trial hearings that are not continued by the court, including probation and pretrial revocation hearings shall proceed as scheduled - counsel and essential parties can appear telephonically if approved by the court.
- JBDP and HOPE court hearings will be continued at the court's discretion, unless the juvenile is detained.

- All Parentage and Support trials and hearings scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued – parties need not appear; the court will set and notify of new date.

- The Marriage Bureau will be open to issue marriage licenses. Wedding ceremonies previously scheduled will go forward, please limit the numbers of attendees. If you wish to reschedule your ceremony, please contact the Marriage Bureau at 202-879-1212 . No additional weddings will be scheduled.

- Mental Health Commission hearings for inpatient respondents only will be held at courthouse in JM-12. Hearings for all current outpatients will be continued. The court will set and notify of the new date. Pursuant to its authority under D.C. Code § 21-545.01(f), the Court will issue an order extending commitments for which a timely recommitment petition has been filed until the next court hearing date. Respondent's presence in court may be waived and respondent can participate remotely. Respondent's attorneys must appear in court or can participate from St. Elizabeths Hospital if remote capacity is available. Assistant Attorney General must appear unless telephonic appearance is approved by the court.

- Mental Health (MHE) Probable Cause hearings will be conducted in JM-12; revocation hearings will be held as scheduled in JM-12. Assistant Attorneys General must appear in court unless telephonic appearance is approved by the court. Respondents' presence may be waived and Respondents and counsel may appear via telephone or remote access from St. Elizabeths Hospital if remote capacity is available.

- All hearings in Mental Habilitation scheduled on or before May 1, 2020 are continued unless the parties agree to appear telephonically. If all parties cannot appear telephonically, the court will set and notify of new date.

- All name change petitions will be continued to a date after May 1, 2020. The court will set and notify of new date.

- All private adoption petitions hearings scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued, the court will set and notify of new date.

- Abuse and Neglect Cases: New removals/initial hearings and all trials to achieve permanency will proceed as scheduled, unless continued by consent of all parties. Motions for emergency hearings will be reviewed and heard at the court's discretion. Parents and parents' attorneys; Guardian ad Litem, and the Office of the Attorney General must appear in court unless allowed to participate remotely.

- All Family Treatment Court cases scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued – parties need not appear, the court will set and notify of new date.

- All SIJS cases will be heard or continued until after May 1, 2020, at the discretion of the court. The court will notify parties whether the matter will be heard, otherwise the court will set and notify parties of new date.

Probate Division

- **Guardianship (INT/IDD) Cases –**

  - 21-day Emergency Guardian Petitions will be ruled upon on the paperwork unless a hearing is requested, hearings will be handled remotely (telephonically, if possible) until further notice;

- 90-day Health Care Guardian Petitions will have a hearing remotely (telephonically, if possible) within 7 days;
- Initial Hearings for General Guardian/Conservator – Hearings set before May 1, 2020, will be held remotely (telephonically, if possible) as directed by the court;
- Trials for General Guardian/Conservator – Unless otherwise indicated by the court, trials set before May 1, 2020 are continued; parties need not appear. The court will set and notify of new dates. If a temporary guardian of the person, extension of temporary guardian, or temporary relief regarding property is needed in the interim, petitioners may request by filing proper paperwork with the court;
- Petitions Post-Appointment – Unless otherwise indicated by the court, hearings scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued. The judge will either rule on the paperwork or set and notify of a new hearing.
- Summary Hearings and Mandatory Review Hearings - Hearings scheduled before May 1, 2020 are continued. The court will set and notify of new dates as needed.

    - **Decedent's Estates (ADM), Small Estates (SEB), Foreign Estates (FEP), Trusts (TRP), Probate Litigation (LIT), Guardianship of Minor's Estates (GDN)** – All hearings scheduled before May 1, 2020, are canceled. The judge will either rule on the paperwork or set and notify of a new hearing.

- **Tax Division**

    - All Status Hearings, Initial Hearings, and Pre-Trial Conferences set between March 17, 2020 and May 17, 2020, are continued; parties need not appear. The court will set and notify parties of new date.

    - The Tax Division Clerk's Office will be available remotely for any inquiries. Call (202) 879-1737 or email TaxDocket@dcsc.gov to communicate with staff. Paper filings may be date-stamped and placed in the Night Deposit Box in the lobby of the Moultrie Building,

500 Indiana Ave., NW, Washington, DC. Paper filings will be processed once, weekly.

- All mediation sessions scheduled before May 1, 2020, will be rescheduled or conducted telephonically.

- **Auditor Master**

All hearings scheduled by the Office of the Auditor-Master through May 1, 2020 will be continued - parties need not appear. All orders for document production are also continued. The office will reschedule all hearings and reissue orders for production of documents.