

From: Michele Frey mfrey@lycolaw.org
Date: March 19, 2020 5:15:47 PM
Subject: Message from Court Administration to LLA Members
To: mfrey@lycolaw.org

Good afternoon. In an effort to further restrict potential COVID-19 exposure within the Courts, yesterday evening the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania announced that all Pennsylvania courts including **trial and magisterial district courts are CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC for non-essential functions through at least April 3, 2020.** The Supreme Court has suspended all time calculations and deadlines relevant to court cases or other judicial business through April 3, 2020. Legal papers or pleadings required to be filed between March 19, 2020, and April 3, 2020, shall be deemed to have been timely filed if they are filed by April 6, 2020.

The Supreme Court's order outlines **essential functions in the Courts of Common Pleas as follows:**

- a. Emergency bail review and habeas corpus hearings;
- b. Gagnon 1 (probation/parole violation) hearings;
- c. Bench warrant hearings pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Criminal Procedure 150;
- d. Juvenile delinquency detention;
- e. Juvenile emergency shelter and detention hearings;
- f. Temporary protection from abuse hearings;
- g. Emergency petitions for child custody or pursuant to any provision of the Juvenile Act;
- h. Emergency petitions for guardianship;
- i. Civil mental health reviews (50 P.S. § 7302);
- j. Emergency equity civil matters (injunctions and stays);
- k. Any pleading or motion relating to public health concerns and involving immediate and irreparable harm; and
- l. Any other function deemed by a President Judge to be essential consistent with constitutional requirements.

Additionally, under paragraph "l" above, President Judge Nancy L. Butts has directed that preliminary hearings, arraignments, guilty pleas, and sentencings *for incarcerated defendants* will be held via video conference.

The Lycoming County Courthouse will continue to be open for only those essential functions listed above, and to the extent possible, the Lycoming County Court of Common Pleas will conduct as many of these proceedings as possible utilizing telephone or video conference in order to limit person-to-person contact.

To the extent non-essential matters can be handled via telephone or video conference, those matters will proceed as scheduled.

Filing of Documents

The Lycoming County Courts strongly encourage the filing of documents with regard to all non-essential functions (any matters not listed above) via U.S. mail to the office of the Prothonotary/Clerk of Courts or

Register and Recorder. If filing via U.S. mail is not possible, documents may be filed via the “filing drop box” located in the lobby of the Lycoming County Courthouse. The document and filing fee (*check or money order only*) must be in a closed envelope addressed to the appropriate filing office and a self-addressed, prepaid envelope must be enclosed for the return of a receipt for payment of filing fees and time-stamped copy of the document. If proper payment is not included, the document will be returned to the sender unfiled.

The filing of documents with regard to **essential functions (those matters listed above)** may be made via U.S. mail or via the “filing drop box” located in the lobby of the Lycoming County Courthouse. The document and filing fee (*check or money order only*) must be in a closed envelope addressed to the appropriate filing office and a self-addressed, prepaid envelope must be enclosed for the return of a receipt for payment of filing fees and time-stamped copy of the document. If proper payment is not included, the document will be returned to the sender unfiled. Additionally, **the outside of the envelope must be clearly marked “Essential Function Filing.”**

Distribution of Court Orders/Filings

The offices of the Lycoming County Prothonotary/Clerk of Courts and Register and Recorder will distribute copies of court orders/filings to local attorneys via email to the email address listed on the Lycoming Law Association web page. Otherwise, distribution will be made via U.S. mail.

Attorney Mailboxes

Attorneys will not have access to their mailboxes in the offices of the Prothonotary/Clerk of Courts and Register and Recorder effective today, March 19, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. through April 6, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. Any mail currently in the mailboxes will be sent to the attorney via U.S. mail.

Please understand that events are very fluid and are continually subject to change as additional information becomes available. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the Court Administration Office.

Thank you,

Adrienne J. Stahl
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<http://www.lyco.org/Courts/CourtAdministration.aspx>

*Please be advised that the Court schedule is available online at <http://courtscheduling.lyco.org/>