

## ORDER CLARIFYING PROCEDURES DURING JUDICIAL EMERGENCY FOR JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURTS FOR THE 27<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the courts in the Commonwealth of Virginia are currently under a judicial order from the Virginia Supreme Court, dated May 6, 2020, that remains in effect from May 18, 2020, until June 7, 2020;

And FURTHER the Virginia Supreme Court has required a specific order to clarify for the public policies and procedures during this transitioning period time period;

IT IS SO ORDERED FOR PERIOD FROM MAY 18, 2020, UNTIL JUNE 7, 2020:


1. Advisement of counsel for incarcerated Defendants, bail hearings, protective orders, child abuse and neglect cases, emergency civil matters, and criminal matters with incarcerated Defendants shall be prioritized on the docket.
2. Each Judge shall work with their local Sheriff's office and the Regional Jail authority to ensure safety for all during this time period. Matters are to be conducted by video, unless specifically approved by the presiding judge, in very limited and controlled circumstances as prescribed by the court.
3. All pretrial hearings for custody, visitation, support, paternity, shall be conducted by Webex video or telephone hearing, if possible.
4. Criminal trials for non-incarcerated adults shall be continued or heard as determined by each presiding judge.
5. Contested civil cases, including show causes filed by the Division of Child Support enforcement, civil show causes regarding custody and visitation, and contested custody and visitation matters, shall be continued or heard as determined by each presiding judge.
6. If any party wishes to withdraw their pending petitions, the party shall contact the respective clerk's office for instruction on withdrawing without appearance necessary.
7. The court will allow any agreements to be submitted for approval without appearance of the parties or hearing, provided the agreement meets the approval of the presiding Judge.
8. All hearings, of any kind, are subject to the following rules, which are subject to amendment at any time:
  - a. No one shall be inside the courthouse unless they are actively conducting court business. The courthouse shall not be used as a waiting area. Procedures will be developed in the coming days to assist litigants, notify them, and direct them when their hearing is "on deck." Social distancing standards will be enforced on the grounds of the courthouse as well.


- b. No one shall congregate in the courthouse. Social distancing shall be strictly enforced by officers of the court. Once anyone's business is concluded, they must leave the building.
- c. Traffic in the courtroom itself will be strictly limited. Cases will be heard singularly and under control of the court. Attorneys and litigants will be notified when their hearing is ready to be heard.
- d. Masks are either being required or strongly encouraged in the courthouse.
- e. All officers of the court are directed to comply with the rules and set examples to the public during this difficult and uncertain time.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that these rules are subject to immediate and unannounced amendment by the presiding judge depending on prevailing circumstances.

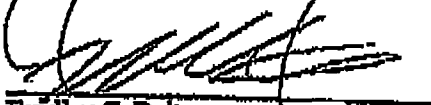
Enter this Order this 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

  
Stephanie Murray Short, Chief Judge

  
Robert C. Vint, Jr.

  
H. Lee Chitwood

  
M. Dawn Cox

  
Bradley G. Dalton