

Amended Public Release related to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) public health issue

Effective April 30, 2020 until otherwise ordered or modified.

From: Barbara Schneider Carter, Administrative Judge

Date: April 30, 2020

The Domestic Relations Division of the Butler County Common Pleas Court continues to monitor the most current statements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Ohio Department of Health, the Butler County Health Commissioner regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), as well as guidance and orders from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio. The Domestic Relations Division is following orders from the Supreme Court and public health officials. At this time, there are further changes in court operations. Key changes are underlined, below.

- **Case Management is closed to the public.** All submittals to the Case Management Office are to be received by fax or email. Documents may be emailed to drcourtwebresponse@butlercountyohio.org, or faxed to 513-887-3560. The Court has made the following changes, effective immediately:
 - **Decrees, Separation Agreements, Shared Parenting Plans for Filing:** Once approved for all but copies and signatures, the parties will bring their originals and copies to the Court. They will place them face down in a cart that has been placed inside the entry doors to the Court and will be monitored by the front desk staff and Case Management.
 - **Complaints and Motions:** Previously approved Case Management documents will be returned by fax or email. The parties are responsible for taking the stamped approved fax or email document and making copies. The Clerk will be authorized to take the approved faxed copies and filing fee for these documents.
- If not approved, parties will need to fax or email the corrected documents back to Case Management. Due to Ohio Department of Health and Supreme Court directives, many employees are working from home; the Court will have fewer staff on site. There may be a delay in obtaining approved paperwork or Court Orders.
- **As an exception,** Case Management will file Objections to and motions to set aside Magistrates' Decisions in order to ensure compliance with Civil Rules. These must be sent via fax or email.
- **Domestic Violence hearings will take place as usual.** If you are ordered to appear in court for a Domestic Violence Civil Protection Order hearing, you are still required to appear in person unless the judge or magistrate assigned to your case has excused your appearance. However, only litigants and attorneys will be permitted in the courtroom, and will be required to wear masks covering their nose and mouth. Witnesses will be asked to wait in the rotunda or outside of the security area. Witnesses will be required to wear masks upon entering the court. **Respondents** subject to a Domestic Violence Civil Protection Order may request a continuance. Plaintiffs that were denied a DVCPO that is set for final hearing may request a continuance.
- **Family Unit Services Suspended:** Domestic Relations Division has suspended its court ordered Home Investigations and Supervised Parenting Time appointments until further order.
- **If it is not safe for you to remain home, you urged to find another safe place to stay during this order if you are able. If you cannot get to court, you may call the Ohio Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-934-9840 or contact your local law enforcement.**
- **If you are scheduled to appear before the Court in the near future,** other than as provided in the previous bullet point, contact your attorney or if you represent yourself, contact the Court at [513-887-3310](tel:513-887-3310), option 2, for further instruction. The Court may find it necessary to reschedule appearances, and will notify the parties. Hearings may be continued for a significant time in the future. We appreciate your patience as we do our best to meet the needs of the public and follow Ohio public health mandates.

Until further order, all scheduling conferences, motions for clarification, objections, pre-trial, and other non-evidentiary hearings will be held by telephone conference and/or by brief.

If you have flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc.) you must inform Court Security at the entrance to the court. You may be denied physical access to the Court. Thank you for your cooperation.