

FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMMON PLEAS, GENERAL DIVISION

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Current as of 3/16/2020 at 12:00 p.m.

- The Hall of Justice is closed to the general public. Only those reporting on probation or bond or with pre-scheduled court hearings are permitted in the building. See further details below.
- Civil and Criminal Jury Trials will be continued on the Court's own motion through April 20, 2020.
- Civil and Criminal Pretrials will be converted to phone conferences through April 8, 2020.
- Judicial Release Hearings scheduled through April 8, 2020 will be conducted via video.
- All Sentence Imposition Review Hearings (Judge Berens) will be continued through April 8, 2020.
- Specialized Docket Hearings and Probation Review Hearings will be conducted on a non-oral basis through April 8, 2020.
- All filing of court documents is required to be done via mail, e-mail, or fax. No in-person filing option will be available to the public through April 8, 2020. Members of the public who are seeking to post bond for a defendant should call the Clerk's Office before visiting in-person for further instruction.
 - Fax Filing: 740-687-0158 (General) or 740-652-7399 (Domestic Relations)
 - E-Mail Filing: clerkefile@fairfieldcountyohio.gov
- Plea, Sentencing, Revocation, Bond, Protection Order, Arraignment, Initial Appearance, and Suppression Hearings will be conducted as usual, pending notification to the contrary.
- Motions to continue will be liberally granted.
- Defendants on Probation and on Bond are to continue reporting as instructed by their Officer.
- Staff has been encouraged to practice social distancing and be mindful of all interactions with the public.

If you have questions about whether your case has been continued, please contact the respective Judge's Assignment Commissioner, Court Administrator, or Clerk's Office via phone or e-mail.

- Judge Berens: Misty Conkle, Assignment Commissioner, 740-652-7431
- Judge Trimmer: Kathy Hartman, Assignment Commissioner, 740-652-7427
- Jill Boone, Court Administrator, 740-652-7424
- Clerk's Office: 740-652-7360 (General) or 740-652-7357 (Domestic Relations)
 - Fax Filing: 740-687-0158 (General) or 740-652-7399 (Domestic Relations)
 - E-Mail Filing: clerkefile@fairfieldcountyohio.gov

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OHIO
GENERAL & DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISIONS**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COVID-19
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

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JOURNAL ENTRY

The Judges of the Fairfield County Court of Common Pleas, General and Domestic Relations Divisions, make the following findings:

1. On March 9, 2020, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine issued Executive Order 2020-01D declaring a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 (also known as “the coronavirus”) pandemic.
2. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic, requiring urgent and aggressive action to control the spread of the virus.
3. On March 16, 2020, the Fairfield County Commissioners urged Fairfield County agencies to “limit gathering and physical contact while continuing services of the government in a reasonable way.”

Based on these findings, the Fairfield County Common Pleas Court, General and Domestic Relations Divisions, finds it necessary to amend its Local Rules and modify its policies to accomplish two overarching goals: (1) protect its employees, litigants, and the community as a whole and (2) administer justice and protect individuals’ constitutional and statutory rights.

Therefore, it is hereby ORDERED that:

1. The Fairfield County Common Pleas Court, General and Domestic Relations Divisions, Local Rules may be temporarily modified to allow Court flexibility, within Constitutional limits, in response to the public health emergency.

2. The Fairfield County Common Pleas Court, General and Domestic Relations Divisions, policies may be temporarily adjusted to maintain essential court operations.
3. Fairfield County Common Pleas Court, General and Domestic Relations Divisions, authorizes the use of videoconferencing equipment and alternative technologies for all actions and proceedings.
4. Fairfield County Common Pleas Court, General and Domestic Relations Divisions, has determined the COVID-19 public health emergency is a good cause for continuances.
5. Petit jurors summoned for jury duty from March 16, 2020 to April 20, 2020 are not required to report for jury service.
6. The Fairfield County Common Pleas Court, General and Domestic Relations Divisions, hereby permits filing of court documents to be done via mail, e-mail, or fax. No in-person filing option—except for new petitions for civil protection orders, petitions for civil stalking protection orders, and emergency custody actions—will be available to the public through April 8, 2020. Payment of filing fees will still be required in order for documents to be filed.
7. The Fairfield County Common Pleas Court, General and Domestic Relations Divisions, will have the lawful authority, within constitutional limits, to do or direct to be done all things necessary to ensure the orderly and efficient administration of justice and public safety for the duration of the declared state of emergency.

It is so **ORDERED**.

/s/ Richard E. Berens
Richard E. Berens, General Division

/s/ David A. Trimmer
David A. Trimmer, General Division

/s/ Laura Smith
Laura Smith, Domestic Relations Division