

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF SANDUSKY COUNTY, OHIO

Journal Entry
Administrative Order
March 20, 2020

In re: Temporary Orders during Covid-19
Corona Virus Public Health Emergency

The Judges of Sandusky County County Court 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 public health crisis.
2. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization officially declared the COVID-19 to be a global "pandemic" requiring "urgent and aggressive action" to control the spread of the virus
3. On March 12, 2020, the State Director of Public Health issued a ban on "mass gatherings" and Ohio Governor DeWine ordered the closure of schools in the state to control the spread of the virus.
4. On March 13, 202, the President of the United States declared a National Emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. On March 15, 2020, the Sate of Ohio Director of Health issued orders limiting access to Ohio's jails to control the spread of the virus
6. On March 16, the Director of Health closed all polling places due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. Federal, State, and local health agencies continue to urge limitations on public interactions in an effort to curb the spread of the virus.
8. Temporary modifications of the rules, practices and procedures of the Sandusky County County Court are necessary to ensure the orderly and efficient functioning of the Court, to ensure that all essential functions of the court are carried out, and to ensure that the health and safety of staff, attorneys, parties and the public remain a priority.

Based upon theses findings, the court has developed and will continue to develop a continuum of flexible responses to protect the health, maintain essential court functions and protect the rights of litigants subject to the jurisdiction of the court.

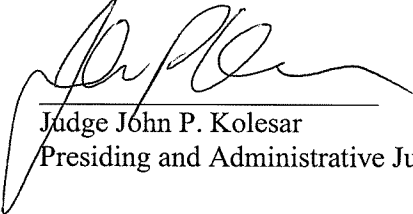
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the following procedures will be in place until further order of the court:

1. All local rules of this court may be temporarily adapted, modified or suspended to allow court flexibility, within Constitutional limits, in response to the public health emergency.
2. The security policies and procedures of the court may be temporarily amended or supplemental to protect public and procedures of the court may be temporarily amended or supplemental to protect public health safety while maintaining essential court functions.
3. Employee/personnel policies may be temporarily adjusted to maintain essential court operations and functions.
4. The court authorizes on a case-by-case basis, the use of audiovisual devices and technologies for court actions and proceedings.

5. The public health emergency may be considered to be a finding of good cause for any purposes, including continuances deemed necessary by assigned judges, on a case-by-case basis. See Atty. Gen. Op. 2020-002.
6. The court will have the lawful authority, within Constitutional limits to do and direct to be done all actions necessary to ensure the orderly and efficient administration of justice for the duration of the declared public health emergency and for such time after the declaration is ended as deemed necessary by the court.
7. For all hearings, the Court shall be notified prior to the scheduled hearing if any of the following apply to any person involved in the matter (parties, witnesses, attorneys):
 - a. Has travelled outside of the United States within the 21 days prior to the hearing;
 - b. Has been exposed to the COVID-19 virus or anyone infected by the virus within 21 days prior to the hearing;
 - c. Has been quarantined, isolated or otherwise restricted by any health entity within 21 days of the hearing
8. All pre-trials may be handled by telephone, unless otherwise specified by the judge assigned to the matter. Parties shall NOT, unless appearing *pro se*, participate in the pre-trial unless otherwise permitted by the court, but must be available by in-person or by telephone to counsel. In criminal or traffic matters, counsel shall ensure that all appropriate communication with their client has occurred prior to the pre-trial.
9. In those cases where defendant is incarcerated, Defendant shall not be transported by the Sheriff unless ordered by the court. Such order shall be by telephone to the appropriate employee of the Sheriff through a deputy Clerk or court employee as appropriate.
10. The court may make any other modifications and authorize operational procedures as deemed reasonable and need not follow formal processes for modification of the Rules of Court, Procedures etc. The court shall make appropriate efforts to ensure that any such modifications are communicated to counsel, parties and the public including the use of the website for the county and/or clerk and through other means to bring attention to those sources.
11. The judges assigned to each building shall be granted the authority to make such formal and informal orders and modifications as deemed necessary.
12. This order shall remain in full force and effect until such time as it is rescinded or modified by the court.

This order shall be effective immediately and any orders that have been issued by the judges at their individual buildings relating to procedures under the Covid-19 health emergency shall be retroactively approved, and if in conflict with this order, the local order shall supersede this order.

SO ORDERED



Judge John P. Kolesar
Presiding and Administrative Judge

CC: County Court #2, Sheriff, OSHP Post 72, 90, Clyde Police, Clerk of Court, Commissioners