

IN RE: FAMILY COURT MODIFICATION : IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
June 2, 2020 : OF BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
: FAMILY COURT
: EMERGENCY JUDICIAL ORDER
:
: NO. 20-3264


ORDER

AND NOW, this 4th day of June, 2020, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Cessation Of Statewide Judicial Emergency Order dated May 27, 2020, the Berks County Supplemental Order for June 2020, and the emergency powers authorized by PA Rule of Judicial Administration 1952(B), it is hereby **ORDERED** that:


1. Until further order of Court, all custody, divorce and support proceedings **shall be conducted remotely**, using appropriate advanced communications technology, unless otherwise ordered by the Court on a case-by-case basis. This applies to cases which are currently scheduled, cases being rescheduled, and new cases being initially scheduled. Parties shall comply with all instructions contained in the Order/Notice to Appear for the scheduled proceeding, including any Addendum to that Order.
2. The Berks County Domestic Relations Section is conducting operations with reduced and remotely working staff and **remains closed to the general public until further notice and order of court**. Parties may file new complaints for support, petitions to modify, or other legal papers by the following methods: E-Services *or* by United States mail, postage prepaid. Filing dates shall be deemed the date of the U.S. postmark on the envelope containing the filing, the electronic submission date in the case of E-Services, or as further amended by order of court.
3. Parties and attorneys shall consult the Berks County DRS webpage: <https://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/Courts/DRS/Pages/default.aspx> to obtain forms, and for information about: E-Services and mail filings, document submission and remote proceedings, payment information, agreements, current DRS operations, and general information.

4. Parties shall consult the Berks County Court of Common Pleas Family Court webpage for updates on Family Court operations and the status of custody and divorce proceedings:
<https://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/Courts/FamCourt/Pages/default.aspx>.
5. Attorneys and parties who have a scheduled custody conciliation should contact Tammy Chojnowski by telephone at 610-478-6208 ext. 5770, by e-mail at tchojnowski@countyofberks.com, or by Fax at 610-478-4995 at least one (1) week in advance of the proceeding to provide their contact telephone number and e-mail and the contact telephone number and e-mail for the other attorney and other party, if known. Attorneys shall have their clients available on the date of the conciliation should their remote participation be needed.
6. Filing deadlines and time calculations for custody, divorce and support cases are extended to at least June 30, 2020.
7. The Prothonotary's Office remains open to receive and process filings from attorneys in custody and divorce cases through the Electronic Filing System (EFS). Filings are also accepted by mail. If a pro se party wants to file an emergency petition, call the Prothonotary's Office at 610-478-6970 to schedule an appointment while the Services Center and Courthouse remain closed to the public. Such filings will be given to the assigned Judge to determine when to schedule it.
8. If exigent circumstances require a family law matter to be heard immediately, parties shall set forth such circumstances in an appropriate pleading or contact the Family Court Administrator, Lisa A. Siciliano, Esquire, by telephone at 610-478-6208, ext. 5771, or by e-mail at lsiciliano@countyofberks.com . Exigent circumstances will be communicated to the assigned Family Court Judge for review and determination as to scheduling of the matter.

BY THE COURT:



Scott E. Lash,
Administrative Judge, Family Court



Thomas G. Parisi,
President Judge