

**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