

RE: Access to Courthouse and : **IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF**
Modification of Court’s Functions : **BRADFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**
During COVID-19 Public Health : **42nd Judicial District**
Emergency : **NO. 2020IR**

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ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

AND NOW, this 17th day of March, 2020, upon consideration of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania being in a state of emergency due to COVID-19 and the Order of Court dated March 16, 2020 issued by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, *In Re: General Statewide Judicial Emergency*, No. 531 Judicial Administration Docket, and the need to safeguard the health and safety of court personnel, court users and members of the public while seeking to assure continued accessibility to the courts, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND DECREED, effective immediately through April 14, 2020 or until further order:

1. Access to the Bradford County Courthouse and a Magisterial District Court within the 42nd Judicial District of Pennsylvania, shall be limited exclusively to:

(a) elected officials whose offices are maintained in the courthouse, courthouse employees, court employees and judges;

(b) jurors (there are no jury trials through March 31, 2020), attorneys and parties to a case with a scheduled proceeding that has not otherwise been continued and witnesses and/or victims in such proceedings. Parties to a Protection from Abuse proceeding are permitted to have an individual accompany them and a member of the Abuse and Rape Crisis Center. Exceptions may be made for parties to a protection from abuse proceeding by making a request to a judge;

(c) individuals with a bona fide business need before the Court or Courthouse office if such business cannot be conducted by phone, email or web based application;

(d) attorneys or self- represented litigants that must file papers or pleadings. (legal forms can be found at www.bradfordcountypa.org and/or ujportal.pacourts.us)

2. Individuals making payments to Bradford County Collections or Bradford County Domestic Relations Office shall do so by mail or electronic submission. If this is not possible for the individual making a payment, cash payments will be accepted at these offices.

3. All Motions for Continuances and proposed Orders for same shall be accepted by fax (570-265-1747) or email (courtadmin@bradfordco.org) to Court Administration without the need to separately file the original with the Prothonotary or Clerk of Courts. Motions for Continuances shall be liberally granted with due consideration to health concerns.

4. Hearings involving inmates in local, county or state prisons will be addressed via Advanced Communication Technology if it can be accommodated.

5. When possible all court related officers shall use Advanced Communication Technology instead of in-person office conferences.

6. The Court will hold emergency, shelter and detention hearings for juvenile and dependency matters. All other matters will be held at the discretion of the Court as needed. Appearances of out of county juveniles or dependent children that are in placement shall be by Advanced Communication Technology.

7. The scheduling of larger court lists will be “staggered” by the hour to avoid congregation of large groups of litigants.

8. The Bradford County Probation Department’s and Bradford County Domestic Relations Department’s policies instituted during this time, if any, are hereby incorporated herein and will be attached hereto.

9. All Magisterial District Court offices are directed to implement similar strategies to minimize exposure between individuals, i.e. staggering scheduling, payment processing policies, etc.) Such polices shall be communicated to Bradford County Court Administration.

9. The Judges and District Court Administrator shall confer regularly with court department chiefs and other personnel to review internal procedures and evolving needs.

10. The Court may take any other appropriate action permitted pursuant to Rule of Judicial Administration 1952(B)(2), upon notice to litigants and to the public.

11. Within 24 hours of this order, notice of this action shall be provided by this court via the District Court Administrator as follows:

- A. Provided to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts;
- B. Posted on the entry doors of the county courthouse of the Judicial District and all Magisterial District Courts within the Judicial District.
- C. Posted on the Judicial District's website; and
- D. Transmitted via e-mail to the local county bar association with the request that such association promptly forward the notice to all members.

BY THE COURT:



Maureen T. Beirne, P.J.

BRADFORD COUNTY
PROBATION AND PAROLE DEPARTMENT

COURT HOUSE - 301 MAIN ST.

TOWANDA, PA 18848

PHONE (570) 265-1706 FAX (570) 265-1730

JUSTIN POPOVICH

CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

MAUREEN T. BEIRNE

PRESIDENT JUDGE

SUZANNE K. IDE

ASST. CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

EVAN WILLIAMS III

JUDGE

TRAVIS J. FITCH

PROBATION OFFICER SUPERVISOR

JEFFREY SMITH

SENIOR JUDGE

Effective 03/16/2020

DUE TO HEALTH CONCERNS, THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT IS PROHIBITING THE ENTRY OF UNANNOUNCED OFFENDERS OR THOSE PEOPLE RELATED TO AN OFFENDER ISSUE INTO THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED INTO THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT UNLESS YOU HAVE A SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT. IF YOU NEED TO CONTACT YOUR PROBATION OFFICER, CALL 570-265-1706 AND YOU WILL BE ROUTED TO THAT INDIVIDUAL. IF AN APPOINTMENT AT THE DEPARTMENT NEEDS TO BE MADE, THAT OFFICER WILL DO SO OVER THE PHONE.

PLEASE CHECK THE BRADFORD COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENTS FACEBOOK PAGE FOR UPDATES TO THIS IMMEDIATE POLICY.

Justin Popovich

Chief Probation Officer

Bradford County