

RICHLAND COUNTY  
CLERK OF COURTS  
FILED

2020 APR 28 A 10:59

IN THE COMMON PLEAS OF RICHLAND COUNTY, OHIO

GENERAL DIVISION  
CLERK OF COURTS

20mis28

IN THE MATTER OF THE COVID-19  
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

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ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

The Judges of the Richland County Court of Common Pleas, General Division, herein incorporates findings 1 through 4 from its March 20, 2020 Administrative Order and makes the following additional finding:

1. On March 27, 2020, the Supreme Court of Ohio issued an Entry Tolling of Time Requirements Imposed by Rules Promulgated by the Supreme Court and Use of Technology stating that “social distancing must be observed during the emergency period in all court proceedings and in each court in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.”
2. On April 27, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine issued Responsible Restart Ohio guidelines continuing the requirement for social distancing and limiting groups to 10 or fewer individuals.

Based on these findings, the Richland County Common Pleas Court, 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 Richland County Common Pleas Court, General Division, Local Rules may be temporarily modified to allow Court flexibility, within Constitutional limits, in response to the public health emergency.
2. The Richland County Common Pleas Court, General Division policies may be temporarily adjusted to maintain essential court operations.
3. The Richland County Common Pleas Court General Division has determined the COVID-19 public health emergency is a good cause for continuances of jury trials in accordance with O.R.C. 2945.72(H) and Attorney General Yost's Opinion 2020-002.
4. The Richland County Common Pleas Court General Division finds that at this time, due to the restrictions on the number of individuals acceptable in a group and the number of jurors required to seat a jury panel, the Court lacks the ability to effectively implement social-distancing practices for jury trials. Accordingly, all jury trials, civil or criminal, continue to be suspended to a date after May 31, 2020. Jury trials will remain on the Court's docket should the parties wish to proceed with a bench trial. Parties wishing to assert their right to a jury trial shall file a motion to continue. The Court will set specific dates by individual entries for cases in which the parties assert their right to a jury trial.
5. All parties are ORDERED to continue with good faith efforts to resolve all cases and discovery shall continue as normal.
6. Petit jurors summoned for jury duty from May 1, 2020 to May 31, 2020 are not required to report for jury service.
7. As the Court is able to provide safe social distancing for groups 10 and under, Attorneys of record are required to appear in person for all court hearings and pretrials with the exception of civil scheduling conferences. Defendants are required to appear in person

for all court hearings with the exception of defendants currently incarcerated by the Ohio Department of Corrections or the Richland County Jail.

8. Parties and/or counsel to any action who are exhibiting COVID symptoms should not appear in person. Rather they should request a continuance through counsel or, for individuals without an attorney, please contact the Court at 419-774-5570.
9. In accordance with social distancing guidelines, Court proceedings are open to the public. Victims, defendants and all parties are permitted by law to have friends, family, and the press present for these proceedings. However, because of the State of Emergency, it is appropriate and strongly encouraged that counsel discourage the appearance in court of all nonessential observers. Any non-party exhibiting signs of illness should not appear in person are subject to being excluded or removed from the courthouse.
10. In-person court appearances for specialized dockets shall resume as previously scheduled in June, 2020. Participants shall report as directed by their supervising officer.
11. Proceedings in Aid and all debtor exams continue to be stayed until after May 30, 2020.
12. The Court hereby continues to stay the execution of Decrees of Foreclosure and Orders of Sale until after May 30, 2020.
13. Attorney/client visitations for individuals in custody in the Richland County Jail will be done using the video visitation stations in the lobby of the jail. The recording function of the video visitation stations has been disabled and will remain so until it has been determined that regular visitations can be resumed.
14. The Richland County Common Pleas Court General Division 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**.



Judge Brent N. Robinson, General Division



Judge Phillip S. Naumoff, General Division

CC: T. Wartyman