

**FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNING BOARD
OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

No. 18 of 2020

In re: Emergency Custody Petitions

ORDER

AND NOW, this 23rd day March, 2020, in light of the Judicial Emergency declared by this Court and by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on March 16th and March 18th, Judicial Administration Docket Nos. 531, the COVID-19 Emergency Disaster Declarations issued by Governor Tom Wolf and by James F. Kenney, Mayor of City of Philadelphia requiring all Philadelphia residents to remain at home or at their place of residence to avoid spreading COVID-19, recognizing, however, that child custody transfers **are permitted** under the City of Philadelphia's Stay at Home Order within the meaning of "visiting/caring for family," and further acknowledging that one of the Court's *essential function* is to address custody disputes, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND DECREED THAT effective immediately Emergency Custody Petitions** may be filed as follows:

- (1) An *Emergency Custody Petition*, setting forth all relevant information, shall be completed by Petitioner and verified. One of the following shall also be submitted with the Emergency Petition:
 - a. A *Complaint for Custody*, if a Custody Complaint has not been filed; or
 - b. A *Petition to Modify Custody*, if a custody order has been issued and the Emergency Petition seeks to modify the custody order; or
 - c. A *Petition for Contempt of Custody* if the Emergency Petition alleges that the current custody has not been complied with;
- 2) Every Emergency Custody Petition must be accompanied by the following:
 - a. A fully completed *Domestic Relations Information Sheet*; and
 - b. A *Criminal Record/Abuse History Verification*
- 3) The Emergency Petition must be forwarded to Family Court by email to the following email address: custodyemergency@courts.phila.gov.
- 4) The Petitioner must provide a telephone number at which they can be reached by court staff.
- 5) The *Emergency Custody Petition* and attachments are available at: <https://www.courts.phila.gov/pdf/forms/domestic-relations/Petition-for-Emergency-Relief-and-Attachments-Custody-COVID-19.pdf>
- 6) The Emergency Custody Petition will be reviewed by the designated Judge.
- 7) Custody emergencies warranting immediate Court intervention will be narrowly construed during this period.
- 8) After review, the Petitioner will be notified by reply email and/or telephone whether the Petition is appropriate for filing in accordance with the General Statewide Judicial Emergency Orders.
- 9) If acceptable for filing, the Petitioner will be provided with instructions regarding filing and service.

This Order shall be filed with the Office of Judicial Records in a Docket maintained for orders issued by the Administrative Governing Board of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, and shall be submitted to the State Court Administrator, posted on the website of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania (<http://www.courts.phila.gov/regs>), and published by The Legal Intelligencer.

BY THE COURT:

/s/ *Idee C. Fox*

**Honorable Idee C. Fox, President Judge
Chair, Administrative Governing Board
First Judicial District of Pennsylvania
President Judge, Court of Common Pleas,
Philadelphia County**