

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS : EMERGENCY ORDER NO. 2020-01
ON OPERATIONS OF THE :
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF :
THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL :
DISTRICT DUE TO EXIGENT :
CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY :
COVID-19 :

ORDER

AND NOW, this 17th day of March, 2020:

The Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has declared the existence of a disaster emergency throughout the Commonwealth to address the threat posed by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Governor announced on March 14, 2020, that he is expanding COVID-19 mitigation efforts to include Bucks County. An increased number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Southeastern Pennsylvania in recent days. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and State and local public health authorities have advised that precautions be taken to avoid exposure to the virus and to prevent its spread, including implementing social distancing measures such as avoiding large gatherings and refraining from non-essential travel. These and other recent developments with regard to COVID-19 in Bucks County and the surrounding counties adversely affect the Courts ability to obtain an adequate complement of trial jurors from a fair cross-section of the community.

By Order dated March 16, 2020, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has authorized President Judges to declare judicial emergencies in their judicial districts which this Court has done by Order dated March 17, 2020, attached hereto.

In light of these developments, and to protect public health, reduce the size of public gatherings, and reduce unnecessary travel within this county, while allowing the Court to continue to continue to perform its constitutional duties, the Court issues the following Order, effective immediately:

1. All time calculations for the purposes of time computation relevant to court cases or other judicial business, as well as time deadlines are suspended, subject to constitutional restrictions.
2. Use of advanced communication technology to conduct court proceedings is authorized, subject to constitutional limitations.
3. The Bucks County Court of Common Pleas will remain open in a limited capacity subject to the following limitations.

4. All Grand Jury as well as all jury and non-jury trials, both criminal and civil are suspended and will be rescheduled at a later date. Jurors shall not report for jury duty.

5. All matters scheduled on the criminal and civil trial lists and miscellaneous lists including but not limited to arraignments and pretrial hearings (conferences) are cancelled pending further notice from the Court.

6. Orphans' Court, Family Court, Non-Support and Family Masters matters will be continued and re-scheduled at a later date.

7. Sheriff sales scheduled for the month of April are postponed and the issuance and enforcement of writs of possession are suspended.

8. The Court will continue to handle Protection from Abuse (PFA) and PFA Contempt matters.

9. The Court will continue to handle bail matters, bench warrants and emergency criminal matters by a designated criminal judge.

10. The Court will be available to handle civil and Orphans' Court emergency matters which must be filed in person. Such emergencies shall include health and medical emergencies, public safety and emergency guardianship appointments.

11. Juvenile Detention hearings and Shelter Care hearings held pursuant to 42 Pa.CSA Section 6332 will be held by the Court as required under the law.

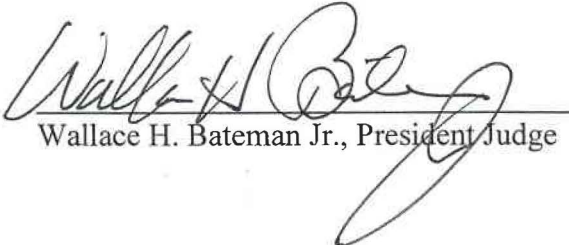
12. All hearings under the Mental Health Act held outside the Justice Center shall continue as scheduled.

13. Temporary restrictions on the operations of the Magisterial District Courts of the Seventh Judicial District are addressed in a separate emergency order.

14. All mass public gatherings, other than court proceedings, are SUSPENDED at the Bucks County Justice Center at 100 North Main Street, Doylestown, Pennsylvania. This includes, but is not limited to, group tours and visits, moot courts and mock trials, bar group meetings and seminars.

15. This Order will expire on April 14, 2020, unless extended by further Court order.

BY THE COURT:


Wallace H. Bateman Jr., President Judge

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT – : NO.: _____ M 2020
DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL :
EMERGENCY :

DECLARATION

Per the Supreme Court's Order dated March 16, 2020, I declare a judicial emergency in the Seventh Judicial District for the following period: March 17, 2020 to April 14, 2020.

The operation of Rule of Criminal Procedure 600 shall be suspended in the Seventh Judicial District during the period of the local judicial emergency.



WALLACE H. BATEMAN, JR.,
PRESIDENT JUDGE
BUCKS COUNTY
SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

DATED: March 17, 2020