

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: ADVANCEMENT OF CIVIL : EMERGENCY ORDER NO. 2020-12  
MATTERS DURING THE PERIOD : 43 MM 2020  
OF THE JUDICIAL EMERGENCY :


ORDER

AND NOW, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020, in view of the Order of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania dated April 1, 2020, and this Court's April 2, 2020 Emergency Order extending the period of the judicial emergency for all courts of the Seventh Judicial District (Common Pleas Court and Magisterial District Courts) through May 15, 2020, the Court having received some indication of confusion among civil practitioners as to the effect of the aforementioned orders on pre-trial civil practice, particularly the propriety of continuing the discovery process during the judicial emergency,

The Court directs that civil pre-trial practice, including discovery, shall continue during the period of the judicial emergency in a manner consistent with government-suggested and -mandated social distancing guidelines. This direction includes, but is not limited to, filing of pre-trial motions, petitions and stipulations through the Prothonotary's electronic filing system or by mail, promulgation of written discovery requests, noticing and service of third party subpoenas for documents and/or testimony, and scheduling of depositions, which are encouraged to be conducted via any available and agreed upon telecommunications technology during periods in which the referenced social distancing guidelines are operative. However, ***parties and counsel shall suspend any deposition or other required appearance of any healthcare professional during the COVID-19 emergency at the request of the subject healthcare professional.***

The Court further directs all parties, and particularly members of the Bar, to act in good faith throughout the COVID-19 emergency, to extend all reasonable courtesies, and to refrain from using the emergency for any advantage either in the discovery process or the litigation generally.

BY THE COURT:

  
Wallace H. Bateman Jr., President Judge