

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
WESTERN DISTRICT**

IN RE: GENERAL STATEWIDE : No. 532 Judicial Administration Docket
JUDICIAL EMERGENCY - :
AUTHORIZATION FOR SUPERIOR :
COURT AND COMMONWEALTH COURT :

ORDER

PER CURIAM

AND NOW, this 16th day of March, 2020, upon consideration of this Court's declaration of a general, statewide judicial emergency, see 531 Judicial Administration Docket (March 16, 2020), the Court deems it necessary for the appellate courts of the Pennsylvania Judiciary to undertake appropriate measures to safeguard the health and safety of court personnel, court users, and members of the public.

1. Accordingly, President Judges of the Superior Court and the Commonwealth Court are AUTHORIZED:

- A. To suspend time calculations for the purposes of time computation relevant to court cases or other judicial business, as well as time deadlines, subject to constitutional restrictions;
- B. To authorize additional uses of advanced communication technology to conduct court proceedings, including oral argument, subject to constitutional restrictions;
- C. To cancel oral arguments and continue affected cases until the next available and practicable oral argument session following expiration of the judicial emergency;

- D. To direct the submission of cases, otherwise suitable for oral argument, for merits consideration based upon the briefs, where appropriate and practicable;
- E. To take any action listed in Rule of Judicial Administration 1952(B)(2)(a)-(i), (m)-(q), (s); and
- F. To take any other necessary administrative actions regarding judicial staff, court facilities and operations.

2. Within 24 hours of undertaking any action as authorized in Paragraph 1 of this order, the President Judge shall, to the extent practicable, provide notice of the action as follows:

- A. Posted on the appellate court's website;
- B. Transmitted to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts for posting on the Unified Judicial System website;
- C. Transmitted to the Pennsylvania Bar Association, with the request that such association promptly forward the notice to all members;
- D. For cases immediately affected by any suspension of oral argument and for which submission on briefs is contemplated, notification provided specifically to the impacted parties.

3. President Judges of the Superior Court and the Commonwealth Court shall immediately notify the Court Administrator of any emergency that causes the closure of court facilities or causes the temporary suspension of court operations.

4. President Judges of the Superior Court and the Commonwealth Court shall arrange for the provision of essential judicial services, including, by way of example, prompt consideration and disposition of cases arising under the Pennsylvania Election Code, see 25 P.S. §§ 2600 - 3591.

5. To the extent the President Judge of the Superior Court or the Commonwealth Court seeks the temporary suspension or modification of statewide court rules as applied to any case or cases, beyond that already provided in this Order, the President Judge is to submit an application to such effect to the Middle District of the Supreme Court Prothonotary. Such applications shall specifically identify the rule or rules at issue and provide justification for the request. To the extent practicable under the circumstances, notice of the request for suspension or modification of statewide court rules shall be provided in accordance with Paragraph 2(A)-(D) of this order.

6. In the event the Superior Court or the Commonwealth Court operates under and take steps authorized by this declaration of judicial emergency, the President Judge shall provide notice to the State Court Administrator, when normal court operations are resumed. This notification shall be provided within 24 hours of the resumption of normal court operations.

A True Copy Patricia Nicola
As Of 03/16/2020

Attest: 
Chief Clerk
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania