

IN THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT FOR THE STATE OF DELAWARE  
STANDING ORDER NO. 2 CONCERNING COVID-19 PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

This 27<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020, it appears to the Delaware Justice of the Peace Court that:

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a serious public health threat;

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has issued Proclamations prohibiting travel to the United States by foreign nationals who recently visited areas acutely impacted by COVID-19; the Department of State has issued Level 3 and Level 4 Travel Advisories for certain affected countries; and domestic and foreign health authorities have issued guidance to citizens within their respective jurisdictions, both recommending and mandating precautionary measures to defend against the spread of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, has issued an advisement that individuals should follow the Center for Disease Control's recommendation to avoid crowds as much as possible;

WHEREAS, the Governor of Delaware has declared a State of Emergency, effective Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am E.S.T. due to a public health threat from COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the Governor of Delaware has declared that Delawareans are to "shelter in place" and that all non-essential businesses are to be closed, beginning on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am;

WHEREAS, the Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court has issued an administrative order restricting judiciary operations and temporarily suspending statutes of limitations, filing deadlines and notarization requirements in all courts;

WHEREAS, the Justice of the Peace Court serves in a continuous capacity during times of emergency in order to ensure that emergency and essential functions of the judicial system may continue;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the following measures will remain in place until further order of the Justice of the Peace Court:

- 1) Beginning March 23, 2020 and ending April 15, 2020, all Justice of the Peace Court locations will be closed to both employees and the public with the exception of 24 hour court operations at Court 11, Court 7 and Court 3;
- 2) Access to Justice of the Peace Court locations at Court 11, Court 7 and Court 3 will be limited to designated court personnel and those persons reasonably necessary for emergency and essential hearings and operations for which telephonic or video resolution of the matter is not feasible;
- 3) The Court has designated personnel who shall continue to report to their scheduled work locations. The remainder of the Court's personnel shall work remotely as directed by supervisory staff, and shall be subject to recall for on-site work at Court locations as necessary to continue essential services;
- 4) Members of the public will be admitted to Justice of the Peace Court locations for the purposes of participating in an emergency or essential hearing or to post bail. Cash payments shall not be accepted for any purpose except for the posting of bail;
- 5) Any Court document generally requiring the signature of a person that is noted with the language "COVID-19 procedure" shall be presumed to have been signed or assented to by the appropriate party;
- 6) The Court will continue to accept non-emergency filings through the Court's e-filing system, E-flex, and through a court e-mail account with an address that will be provided to the public and the Bar, and through drop boxes at the 24-hour locations;
- 7) Due to the nature of landlord-tenant matters, such cases will be given scheduling preference upon the normal resumption of services;
- 8) Access to the court by members of the public seeking to utilize a public access terminal or otherwise request court documents pursuant to Policy Directive 14-250 (Public Access to Court Documents) shall be limited to ensure that social distancing practices may be applied. The public may utilize the electronic mail box at [COVID-19@delaware.gov](mailto:COVID-19@delaware.gov) to request public access documents;
- 9) All Justice of the Peace Court staff and any other person entering a court location through a non-public entrance shall engage in a health screening pursuant to guidelines established by the Delaware Division of Public Health. Access to the court location may be denied if an individual does not pass the health screening;

10) The Court will continue to explore alternative means of conducting court business utilizing available technology and best practices. As such, this order is subject to change if, and when, alternative means of conducting proceedings become available.



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Alan G. Davis

Chief Magistrate