

DV access outer four counties:

Montco:

For any employee or member of the public that MUST come to our buildings, please be sure to practice safe distancing, good hygiene, and know that our buildings all are under an enhanced cleaning protocol to assist in minimizing risk.

o The Montgomery County Human Services Center, 1430 DeKalb Street, Norristown, is closed to the public.

o Willow Grove, Pottstown, and Lansdale Offices are closed to the public and employees.

o One Montgomery Plaza, 425 Swede Street, Norristown, is closed to the public.

o Common Pleas EMERGENCY functions will be limited to the Courthouse ONLY.

o Court hours are restricted to 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

o Temporary PFA processing will stop at 1 p.m. daily

o The Court's Filing Offices (Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, Clerk of the Orphans' Court) will be CLOSED to the public, except to process any filings related to the EMERGENCY MATTERS permitted by the Court's Order.

o Preliminary Hearings for incarcerated defendants at the MDJ level WILL BE conducted by means of videoconferencing.

o Domestic Relations Office will now be CLOSED to the public. On-line filings ONLY will continue to be accepted.

Delco:

Protection from Abuse Hearings

Temporary Protection from Abuse Petitions can continue to be filed with the Delaware County Judicial Support Office and heard by the Motion Judge as noted above according to the usual court practice. (Again, per common court practices, Magisterial District Justices remain available for review of temporary protection from abuse applications after hours and weekends through a telephone call to the local police or dialing 911.)

It is the court's current intention to make every reasonable effort to schedule and attempt to hold hearings on final protection orders as soon as safely possible and assuming the same, consistent with its usual weekly scheduling of such matters. Cases that have children as protected parties and/or evict a respondent from his or her residence will be given priority consideration for hearings within the ten (10) day normal scheduling.

The Protection from Abuse Master until further notice will not sit.

Chesco:

Emergency Protection Order (EPO)

In evenings, on weekends, or during holidays you may seek an EPO. An EPO will last until the next day the Chester County Courthouse in West Chester is open. The District Judge on call for Chester County can issue an EPO. Call the police or DVCCC to find out which District Justice is on call. The EPO is effective as soon as it is signed, but the abuser will not know about the EPO until he/she is served the order by the police.

Temporary Protection from Abuse (Temporary PFA)

Survivors of domestic violence may petition for a PFA Order at the Chester County Courthouse in West Chester, from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The DVCCC staff can help you prepare the paperwork for your petition. A Temporary PFA Order is issued by a Family Court Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. The Temporary PFA lasts until a hearing can be scheduled (usually about 10 days). The sheriff must serve the abuser in person with the PFA and a notice of the hearing date. PFAs can include the following clauses: no abuse, no contact, bar the abuser from the home, award temporary child custody, and/or confiscate weapons. All Orders are not alike; the Judge will decide what is appropriate in individual cases, based on the facts presented to him/her. There is no fee charged for filing the petition. Court costs are usually assessed against the abuser. Court cost may be charged to the petitioner if he/she does not appear or withdraws the petition.

Bucks:

Family Court matters- 215.348.6822 (Family Court Operations Memo)

Civil matters- 215.348.6191

It is strongly recommended that you call ahead. Otherwise, visitors who arrive without having called ahead will wait in a queue and be seen in order, based on their time of arrival. Visitors in the queue will be asked to maintain a distance of six feet from other persons at all times.

<http://www.buckscounty.org/docs/default-source/CourtDocs/familycourtoperations-covid19.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

“FAMILY COURT OPERATIONS DURING JUDICIAL EMERGENCY PERIOD

The Family Division of the Bucks County Court of Common Pleas will continue limited operations during the declared Judicial Emergency that currently extends through April 14, 2020. Set forth below are the general standards that will apply during this emergency period.

A. Essential operations

1. Protection from Abuse (PFA) proceedings, including emergency applications, hearings on Petitions for Relief and hearings on Petitions for Contempt of PFAs will continue subject to the following modifications:

a. In any case where a hearing is scheduled, agreements for continuances, for continued orders or similar things can be submitted by the attorney for one of the parties without the physical presence of the other attorney and parties, provided that the other attorney and parties are available by telephone.

b. The Court will be implementing measures to comply with social distancing protocols. Multiple judges and courtroom staff will be available to limit the number of people gathered in one place and to minimize the amount of time required for litigants and counsel to be present. While waiting to have their cases called, litigants will not be seated in the courtroom, but instead will utilize the hallways to maintain an appropriate social distance from others. Hand sanitizer will be available in each courtroom.

2. The Domestic Relations Section will continue to operate to ensure that support matters are processed, and appropriate enforcement actions are maintained. All parties subject to a Support Order are required to continue to make the required payments. All payments are to be made through the PACSES system. In person payments at the Domestic Relations Office will not be accepted during the emergency period. Domestic Relations proceedings will be modified as follows:

a. All conferences that are not continued will be conducted by telephone. All parties and attorneys shall be available for a telephone conference call from the Domestic Relations Office at the scheduled conference time. Any documents that are required to be submitted at a conference must be submitted at least 48 hours in advance. Specific instructions on how to submit the documents are posted on the Domestic Relations Section webpage or are available by emailing the Domestic Relations Office. CSBucks@PACSES.com

b. Except in situations that the Court determines are emergencies, all hearings for new cases, modifications and special listings will be continued to dates after the end of the emergency period. Notice of the continuance and new date will be sent by the Domestic Relations Office.

c. Contempt hearings will remain scheduled as needed. Any party notified of a contempt hearing is required to be physically present. They may be excused from attending the hearing IF at least forty-eight hours prior to the date of the scheduled hearing the full amount of any past due payments has been made AND are posted on the PACSES system.

3. Any custody conferences that are not continued will be conducted by telephone. All parties and attorneys shall place a telephone conference call to the Family Master's Office at the scheduled conference time. The telephone number to use is 215-340-8821. Any documents that are required to be submitted at a conference must be submitted at least 48 hours in advance. Submissions may be done via fax to 215-348-6792.

4. Emergencies for other Family Court matters will be handled on a case by case basis. Any emergency filing will be forwarded by the Prothonotary's Office to the Family Master's Office. After it is initially reviewed by the Family Master on duty, it will be reviewed by the on-duty Family Court Judge. That judge will determine what needs to be done. That may include doing a telephone conference, scheduling an emergency hearing or otherwise disposing of the matter.