

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**IN RE: 55<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT** : **AD**  
**DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY :** No. **3** of 2020  
**ACCESS TO JUDICIAL FACILITIES/ :**  
**MODIFICATION OF PROCEDURES :**

PROthon & CLERK OF COURTS  
2020 MAR 18 P 4:19  
**FILED**

**EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF COURT**

AND NOW, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020, upon consideration of the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania having declared a state of emergency due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, COVID-19; and pursuant to the Order of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court dated March 17, 2020, the Court of Common Pleas of the 55<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has declared a JUDICIAL EMERGENCY UNTIL APRIL 15, 2020 AT 9:00 A.M.

Due the demographics of Potter County, the adequacy of resources to appropriately address any widespread outbreak of Coronavirus in Potter County, Pennsylvania, and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public, employees and participants in court proceedings within the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania, **IT IS HERBY ORDERED AND DECREED**, effective immediately:

1. All Court operations are limited to **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS ONLY** at this time. Essential functions shall include the following: emergency legal matters, mental health reviews, bench warrants and detainer hearings, protection from abuse proceedings, emergency juvenile dependency and delinquency hearings, emergency guardianships, preliminary hearings for jailed defendants, preliminary arraignments, bail hearings and such other matters designated by the Courts.


2. The expanded use of advanced communication technology is authorized and encouraged to conduct all court proceedings for the period covered under this emergency declaration. Hearings by phone may also be conducted if warranted unless a Constitutional right is infringed. This provision shall apply to the Court of Common Pleas, the Magisterial District Courts and the Domestic Relations Office.
3. For filing purposes with the Potter County Court of Common Pleas, counsel shall use the mail and in rare situations where an exigent circumstances exist, may file via facsimile, or by email to the Prothonotary at [kschroeder@pottercountypa.net](mailto:kschroeder@pottercountypa.net), with payment of filing fee to follow. The filing of divorce actions shall be by mail only. In addition to filing with the Prothonotary, all motions requiring immediate attention should also be sent to the Court Administrator by email at [jsaulter@pottercountypa.net](mailto:jsaulter@pottercountypa.net). PAC filing is also available for criminal matters.
4. All hearings and conferences previously scheduled during the period covered by this declaration are cancelled and shall be rescheduled after April 15, 2020. Future scheduling orders involving Essential Functions are not affected by this Order.
5. All court calendars, appearances, scheduling orders, and subpoenas previously issued by the Court covering the period of the judicial emergency are cancelled.
6. All Court Orders, local rules of Court that address time requirements, time limitations, or filing deadlines are tolled for the period covered by the emergency declaration.
7. The application of Pa. R. Crim. P. 600 is suspended for the period of time covered by the emergency declaration.
8. Access to Potter County Courthouse and the Magisterial District Courts within the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District, as applicable, shall be limited exclusively to elected

officials whose offices are maintained in the respective courthouse, county commissioners, courthouse employees, court employees, attorneys, parties to a case with a scheduled proceeding that has not otherwise been continued in the respective courthouse or before a Magisterial District Court within the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Potter County, subpoenaed witnesses and/or victims in proceedings being held within the Potter County Courthouse and before Magisterial District Courts within the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Potter County, prospective and selected jurors, and members of the media.

9. Access to the Potter County Courthouse and Magisterial District Courts within the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania, by the general public shall be restricted and limited to official and essential business that requires immediate attention, which such need shall be determined by the Potter County Sheriff, and Magisterial District Judges within the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania on a case by case basis.
10. Potter County Sheriff, Glenn Drake and his deputies shall immediately take over the single point of entry at the Potter County Courthouse for purposes of enforcing this Order of Court. Furthermore, Glenn Drake, Potter County Sheriff, and his deputies are vested with full authority to enforce this Order of Court.
11. All Magisterial District Court offices are directed to implement similar strategies to minimize exposure to themselves and the public.
13. Any person who believes that they are being unjustly denied access to the Potter County Courthouse or the Magisterial District Courts within the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Potter County may immediately:

- a. Contact Jennifer Saulter, District Court Administrator of the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania by telephone at 814-274-9720 or by email at [jsaulter@pottercountypa.net](mailto:jsaulter@pottercountypa.net) to address being deprived of access to the Potter County Courthouse or the Magisterial District Courts of the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District ; and/or
  - b. File a petition with the Court of Common Pleas at the above captioned docket number to address being deprived of access to the Potter County Courthouse or Magisterial District Courts within the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District.
14. The exclusive purpose of this Order of Court is to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of the public, county and court employees, and users of the Potter County Courthouse, Magisterial District Courts and the Domestic Relations Office of the Fifty-Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania. This Order of Court shall remain in effect until April 15, 2020, unless modified by further Order of Court.
15. A copy of this Order of Court shall be prominently posted on the main entry of the Potter County Courthouse and the offices of Magisterial District Judges Annette Easton, (Coudersport, PA), Kari McCleaff, (Shinglehouse, PA) and Christopher Kalacinski, (Galeton, PA).

BY THE COURT:



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Stephen P. B. Minor, President Judge  
55<sup>th</sup> Judicial District