

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
OF LUZERNE COUNTY**

IN RE: 11th JUDICIAL DISTRICT : NO: 2020 05/23
JUDICIAL REOPENING PROCEDURES : NO: 494 MD 2020

ORDER

AND NOW, this 29th day of May, 2020, this Order is HEREBY ISSUED to address the practices and procedures associated with the reopening of the Luzerne County Court system.

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. All individuals entering any Court facility shall comply with CDC guidelines and/or directives of the Luzerne County Sheriff.
2. All individuals entering any Court facility shall wear a face covering.
3. No one other than the litigants, counsel and witnesses will be permitted to attend a hearing.
4. Litigants, counsel and witnesses are to appear at the Courthouse ten minutes prior to their scheduled court proceeding.
5. Members of the press shall be permitted to attend hearings if they comply with CDC guidelines and/or directives of the Luzerne County Sheriff.
6. Advanced Communication Technology (ACT) will be used at all times when possible and practical.
7. All jury trials are suspended until September 8, 2020.
8. Admission to court rooms will be based upon physical/social distancing requirements as provided by the CDC guidelines and/or directives of the Luzerne County Sheriff.

CLERK OF COURTS CRIMINAL
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PROTHONOTARY LUZERNE COUNTY
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9. Attorneys and *pro se* litigants are encouraged to electronically file documents; however, if that is not possible, the Prothonotary and Clerk of Courts will only accept filings in the basement of the Courthouse located near the Sheriff's Department.

10. Court employees will not attend any off-site conferences or trainings without prior approval by the President Judge.

FAMILY COURT

1. Family Court motions requesting a custody conference shall be emailed to Sharon Mudlock at Sharon.Mudlock@luzernecounty.org. The motion will be reviewed by the Judge and, if approved, the party filing the motion will receive a signed version returned via email for filing and service.

2. Family Court motions requesting special relief and/or contempt shall be emailed to Nancy Biscontini at Nancy.Biscontini@luzernecounty.org. The motion will be reviewed by the Judge and, if approved, the party filing the motion will receive a signed version returned via email for filing and service.

3. Family Court motions for *pro se* individuals without access to email will be held on Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Bernard C. Brominski Building, 113 West North Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711.

4. ACT will be used at all times when possible and practical at the discretion of the Judge or Hearing Officer.

CIVIL

1. Normal motions hours (8:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.) will resume as of June 8, 2020.

2. Civil jury trials may be held commencing September, 2020 subject to the parameters to be set forth by this Court.

3. ACT will be used at all times when possible and practical at the discretion of the Judge.

ORPHANS COURT

1. Normal motions hours (Tuesday: 12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. and Thursday: 8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.) will resume as of June 8, 2020 at the Penn Place Building, 20 North Pennsylvania Blvd, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701.

2. ACT will be used at all times when possible and practical at the discretion of the Judge.

CRIMINAL

1. Pennsylvania Rule of Criminal Procedure 600 is suspended until September 14, 2020 subject to any intervening orders.

2. All hearings involving an inmate currently lodged in a correctional facility will be accomplished using ACT until further notice.

3. Criminal jury trials may be held commencing September, 2020 subject to the parameters to be set forth by this Court.

4. Specialty Court and Treatment Court will resume on June 12, 2020.

5. DUI Court will resume on June 10, 2020.

6. Juvenile Delinquency proceedings shall take place at the Penn Place Building, 20 North Pennsylvania Blvd, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701.

PFA COURT

1. Protection from Abuse hearings will resume on June 8, 2020.

2. All PFA hearings will be staggered by time.

3. All ex parte PFA hearings will be held Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURTS

1. As of June 8, 2020, all Magisterial District Courts will be open.

2. No one other than the litigants, counsel and witnesses will be permitted to attend a hearing.

3. All Magisterial District Judges shall insure that the litigants, counsel and witnesses are called into the court building one case at a time.
4. No more than five cases total (civil or criminal) shall be scheduled each hour and the times of the hearings must be staggered.
5. The general provision outlined in Section A also apply to Central Court proceedings.

COMPLIANCE HEREWITH IS DIRECTED.

BY THE COURT:


MICHAEL T. VOUGH, P.J.

Copies To:

All Judges of the 11th Judicial District
All MDJ Offices
Paul Hindmarsh – District Court Administrator
Court Administration
David Pedri, Esquire – Luzerne County Manager
Romilda Crocamo, Esquire – Luzerne County Solicitor
Stephanie Salavantis, Esquire – Luzerne County District Attorney
Steven Greenwald, Esquire – Luzerne County Public Defender
John Hakim, Esquire – Luzerne County Office of Law