

FROM: JUDGE SPEES
AUGLAIZE COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT
PROBATE, JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISIONS

Due to increase in Covid-19 numbers, effective **JANUARY 4, 2021** to April 30, 2021, the following changes will take effect:

- 1. The Court will not conduct any contested hearings involving more than 10 persons, including parties, attorneys and witnesses, unless specifically authorized otherwise. Fourteen (14) days prior to any scheduled contested hearing, counsel or parties, if unrepresented, will:**
 - a. File a written witness list with the Court and if the list contains more persons than permitted, the hearing will be vacated and set for additional final pretrial and then re-scheduled for a final contested hearing when possible to do so safely.**
 - b. If no witness list is filed, the Court will only allow the party to testify and no other witnesses will be allowed as to that party. If the other party files a witness list, the Court will proceed in the same fashion as paragraph a.**
 - c. If the parties have an agreement they may notify the Court, in writing, and the Court will proceed on the scheduled hearing date.**
 - d. If counsel or parties wish to conduct a simple hearing by Zoom, they may request such in writing and the Court will arrange same if agreed to by all parties.**
- 2. All pretrials will be conducted by telephonic conference only. Court staff will contact the attorney's office involved to initiate the pretrial telephonic conference. Final pretrials will be held in person but only attorney and client will be permitted to attend. No additional support persons will be permitted.**
- 3. There will be no hearings set at the same time and instead, hearings will be given a specific time with enough time scheduled between hearings to allow the scheduled hearing to go to completion and the parties and counsel to vacate the building before the next hearing begins.**
- 4. Presentation hearings will be scheduled on a date certain as indicated by the attorney(s). Remember, fax filings and email filings are authorized in Probate and Juvenile Court and fax filings are authorized in Domestic Relations matters. Probate/Juvenile Court Fax 419-738-1061 and Civil Criminal/Domestic Relations Fax 419-739-6768 or juvenile and probate matters may be emailed to juvprobdom@auglaizecounty.org.**
- 5. Social distancing will be maintained and only counsel and parties will be permitted in the building and at the hearing. In juvenile cases, only one parent will appear with the child. In all hearings, parties and counsel must wear masks unless specifically allowed otherwise.**

6. The Court will proceed as usual with children detained, abuse, neglect and dependency matters, domestic violence civil protection orders, cases with emergency orders, involuntary commitments, emergency guardianships and marriage license applications.
7. Members of the public wishing to get copies of documents in the possession of the court, applying for marriage licenses or having unscheduled business with the court must contact the court ahead of time and make an appointment to get the documents requested, the marriage license applied for or other court business.
8. Members of the public, counsel, parties or others having business with the court are encouraged to contact the court prior to any appearance if they are immunocompromised, carrying a fever, or displaying symptoms of the virus, so that their appearance before the court may be otherwise rescheduled.
9. If parties have filed their own actions, without an attorney, these same rules apply. Court appearances will include parties only and no additional support persons without prior approval from the Court. Parties not represented by an attorney must provide a current address and telephone number at which they may be contacted.
10. Any other matters may be considered on a case by case basis. This procedure will remain in effect until April 30, 2021 subject to further extension, more serious restriction or relaxing of rules should circumstances dictate.

The Court is simply attempting to limit and contain any potential spread of Coronavirus by limiting person's contact with one another and others through court proceedings.

Cc: Adult Probation; Clerk of Courts; Common Pleas Court, General Division; Law Library; Municipal Court; Prosecuting Attorney; Public Defender; Victim Assistance; Courthouse Security; Sheriff; Title Department; Auditor; Board of Elections; Commissioners; Extension Office; Recorder; Technology; Treasurer; Veterans; Job and Family Services; All Attorneys.