



COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
DIVISION OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

Case No: M2000004
**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
EMERGENCY ORDER
COURT OPERATIONS AND
ACCESS DURING HEALTH
CRISIS**

**IN RE: COURT COVID-19 / CORONAVIRUS POLICY
EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

Throughout the past several weeks, the Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court has taken proactive steps to maintain essential functions of the Court while mitigating the risk for infection and spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease during this State of Emergency. The Court has prioritized the safety and well-being of the people we serve, our workforce, and the public appearing in our Court. The plan is fluid and evolving based upon the science as well as local, state, and federal guidance and recommendations.

On March 30, 2020, the Supreme Court of Ohio issued *Guidance to Local Courts COVID-19 Public Health Emergency*. On April 28, 2020, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio issued *Updated Guidance for the Courts of Ohio*, recommending that Ohio Courts follow the Governor's recommendations outlined in the April 27, 2020 *Responsible Restart Ohio* initiative. Additionally, the *Director's Stay Safe Ohio Order* was issued on April 30, 2020 providing guidelines to employers to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Since March 16, 2020, Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court has implemented many different strategies that are aligned with the guidelines set out by the Supreme Court of Ohio and Governor DeWine, including but not limited to, temperature and health screening upon entry to 800 Broadway, hand sanitizer stations in public areas, increased cleaning sanitization of all areas of the Court, access to remote hearings, and expanded alternative filing methods. In an effort to further protect our staff and the public, the Court issues the following additional orders:

- The Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court has implemented the following measures to reduce but not eliminate foot traffic within the Court while prioritizing access to justice and safety:



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- Public access to the Domestic Relations Court located at 800 Broadway shall be limited to individuals necessary to court proceedings such as litigants, attorneys, and witnesses. Additionally, media, contractors, mail carriers/delivery persons, and supply deliverers will also be permitted.
 - The Court has and will continue to conduct hearings via phone and video as deemed appropriate and as requested.
 - Attorneys and pro se litigants are encouraged to utilize the “Order to Appear Telephonically or Via Video Conference” Form 8.1B available on our website at https://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/government/courts/court_of_domestic_relations/forms_procedures.
 - E-filing services are open to attorneys and pro se litigants.
 - Filings are also being accepted via US Postal Service mail.
- All individuals entering the Domestic Relations Court located at 800 Broadway shall submit to a temperature check through a non-invasive scanning thermometer or forehead temperature strip and health assessment to evaluate whether the individual may be showing symptoms of COVID-19 as directed in the Hamilton Count Domestic Relations Emergency Order dated April 1, 2020. No one exhibiting signs of illness, including a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, will be admitted or allowed to stay.
 - The Hamilton County Sheriff, deputies, and other security agents shall not be liable for anyone admitted or denied access to the Domestic Relations Court at 800 Broadway regardless of individual’s medical health.
 - All individuals entering the Domestic Relations Court located at 800 Broadway shall wear a facial covering or mask made of cloth or similar material that covers the nose, mouth, and chin at all times, and is separate and apart from one’s clothing, and does not obscure the identity of the person. Upon the Court’s discretion, exceptions to this order may be made for the following reasons:
 - Facial coverings are not advisable for documented health reasons. This exception requires approval by a Judge, Magistrate, or Court Administration.
 - Facial coverings are not required when an employee works alone in an assigned area.
 - There is a functional or practical reason for an individual not to wear a facial covering. This exception requires approval by a Judge, Magistrate, or Court Administration.
 - The Hamilton Domestic Relations Court and all individuals herein shall continue to function under current social distancing protocols as ordered by the Governor of Ohio; and should the Governor order further modifications, all individuals within the courthouse shall abide by said protocols.

- At no time in the Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court, shall there be more than 10 individuals in any courtroom, office, conference room, or other space that is confined, as determined by the Administrative Judge.
- The Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court shall continue to have the lawful authority, within constitutional limits, to do and direct to be done all things necessary to ensure the orderly and efficient administration of justice for the duration of the declared public health emergency.

Changes to court policies and procedures can be found at the Court of Domestic Relations website: https://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/government/courts/court_of_domestic_relations.

This Administrative Order shall be effective immediately and until further notice.



Administrative Judge Jon H. Sieve,
on behalf of all Judges of the
Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas,
Division of Domestic Relations

MAY 07 2020

Judge Jon H. Sieve
Date