

Please be advised that pursuant to the Fourth Order Modifying and Extending Declaration of Judicial Emergency In Response to Covid-19 Emergency, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court extended the Judicial Emergency until June 7, 2020. However, the Chief Justice in his Order has stated:

".... 3) Courts should continue to conduct as much business as possible by means other than in-person court proceedings. In all civil and criminal matters, courts are encouraged to continue and even increase the use of video conferencing, telephone, teleconferencing, email or other means that do not involve in-person contact. These methods are preferred over in-person court proceedings.

4) Notwithstanding the ongoing preference for conducting hearings by video conferencing or telephone, effective May 18, 2020, all courts may hear in-person non-emergency matters if they determine it is safe to do so, and provided they comply with the guidance for transitioning from emergency to routine operations provided by the Office of the Executive Secretary in order to minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19 from in-person court proceedings...."

The Chief Justice further stated in his Order that all statute of limitation and all other case-related deadlines, excluding discovery deadlines, shall continue to be tolled through June 7, 2020. In all civil cases, any tolling of deadlines and obligations arising out of Part Four of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia shall terminate effective the date of this order (May 18, 2020).

Based on this Order and the guidance from the Office of the Executive Secretary, the judges of the Loudoun County JDR Court have determined that it is safe in our courtrooms to hear cases in person. Effective May 18, 2020, the Loudoun County JDR Court will be transitioning from emergency to routine operations, as follows:

All cases on the dockets (civil, criminal and traffic, emergency or non emergency), will be called and heard in person or by remote appearance as scheduled. Cases will be limited to the assigned docket time (example: Tuesday civil status docket is 15 minutes per family irrespective of the number of cases for that family that appear on the docket).

Counsel/parties/Guardians ad litem wishing to appear by WebEx or telephone must make a written request 24 hours in advance of the court date and must provide a copy of the request to opposing counsel/party. Forms were previously supplied in a prior e-mail and are available at the Clerk's office. Forms are also attached again to this e-mail. These forms will be attached to summonses issued by this Court.

(a) The Court will not hear cases by WebEx or telephone that are scheduled for more than 30 minutes. These cases will be continued unless counsel and the parties all agree that they wish to go forward in person. The Court will make exceptions for witnesses to appear by telephone or WebEx.

(b) Continuances requests must be made pursuant to the JDR Court's established policies. Continuance requests will be liberally granted. Cases will no longer be automatically continued when the parties or counsel fail to appear for the scheduled hearing. The court will no longer contact attorneys from the courtroom as it has previously done as a courtesy unless the attorneys have filed a request to appear by telephone or WebEx. If parties/counsel fail to appear and have not requested to appear by telephone or WebEx or filed a motion to continue, those cases will be dismissed (if petitioner fails to appear) or further process issued such as a rule to show cause for failure to appear (if the respondent fails to appear). In criminal cases where a defendant fails to appear without communicating with the Court, a rule to show cause or *capias* may issue (depending on the facts of the case).

(c) Counsel/parties are encouraged to reach stipulations about admission of documents and witness testimony.

The court will observe social distancing in the courtroom and will limit the number of persons in the courtrooms to ten person or less. Witnesses will remain outside of the courtroom and should maintain social distancing in the lobby. **Moral support persons will not be permitted in the courtroom, and counsel and the parties are requested not to bring them to the courthouse.**

Parties/counsel are encouraged to wear masks.