

## NORFOLK COUNTY PROBATE & FAMILY COURT

**Disclaimer:** The following is offered of an informational summary of court operations based on our interpretation of data provided by the Court and other sources. This summary should not be relied upon as it provides general information and may not include the most accurate or up to date procedures at this time.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All courts, including Norfolk PFC, are constantly adjusting their procedures during the coronavirus crisis. Please contact the Court for up to date information.

For specific questions about Norfolk PFC operations, please contact the Court by email at [norfolkprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:norfolkprobate@jud.state.ma.us) or by phone at (781) 830-1278.

- i. Courthouse is **closed** to the public until further notice.
- ii. On March 20, 2020, First Justice Gorman issued a letter to the Members of the Bar, which echoes the message of Probate and Family Court Standing Order 2- 20; namely, access to the courts is limited to emergency situations only (*see above*).
- iii. On March 25, 2020, First Justice Gorman issued a **second** letter to the Members of the Bar, which sets forth the below *specific procedures*:
  - Specific Events –
    - a. Emergency Matters – some are still being handled administratively and/or by phone conference (see above).
      - i. **NOW 7** If you believe you have an emergency, you must **email** a copy of your *motion and an affidavit* setting out “*exceptional exigent circumstances*” warranting action at this time and provide us with contact information for both sides (phone and email). The emails are being screened by Court staff.
      - ii. If your case is deemed to be an emergency that must be addressed a phone conference will be scheduled.
      - iii. If an order enters it will be emailed to each side.
    - b. Scheduled Motions, Pre-Trials, and Contempts – *continued*. Court staff is working to reschedule all of these hearings for dates in May and June.

- c. Trials (in progress or not yet begun) – not being continued at this time:
- i. After re-opening the Court’s will assign trial dates for trials **already in progress** prior to the closure.
  - ii. **For other trials** – attorneys and judges have volunteered to hold “blitz sessions,” where a number of trials that have not yet begun will be brought in each day to see if the team can assist people in coming to partial or full resolutions, limiting or eliminating their time for trial.
- d. Uncontested – not being continued at this time
- i. Once the doors are re-opened the Court plans to hold all day uncontested Divorce Hearing Sessions where one Judge will hold at least 20 hearings.
- e. Agreements – for Modification, Contempt, 209C, temporary orders, or for Judgment on Modification and Contempts:
- i. If memorialized in writing and signed by parties and attorneys, **scan an email** the Agreement and supporting documentation (including financial statements) to the assigned Judge’s secretary (see below) and the matter will be handled administratively.
  - ii. The Judge’s secretary will respond that your packet has been received and forwarded to the Judge. If no response is received, please contact Judicial Secretary again via **email**. Judgment shall enter and be mailed to each side.
  - iii. **If pro-se is involved** – that party also needs to submit a signed affidavit stating *that they understand and agree with all terms of the agreement, that their financial statement is accurate, that they understand that counsel represents the other Party only and that they understand they are waiving their right to an in-person hearing as to this matter only.*
- f. Adoption – being approved administratively:
- E-filing

a. Court is requesting **e-filing** (limited to certain actions) or **mail** filings to the Court addressed to the Registry Staff.

- Probation

a. The Probation Department is attempting to perform their investigations by phone and/or FaceTime. Everything is status quo with drug/alcohol testing.

b. Ensure clients are in compliance.