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***We are posting each Massachusetts county's orders and instructions for Probate & Family Court operations during the coronavirus as we receive them.***

**UPDATE: 5/15/20:** For the most up to date information on how Massachusetts Probate & Family Courts are responding to the coronavirus crisis, please check out our [most recent blog, which includes updates](#).



As noted in our blog on statewide [coronavirus standing orders entered by the Massachusetts Probate & Family Court department](#), individual Massachusetts counties have been releasing case management protocols for handling cases during the coronavirus crisis. We have not received guidance on how cases are being handled in every Massachusetts county, but are publishing everything that we receive.

## **UPDATED 4/3/20: Massachusetts Probate & Family Court Protocols: County-by- County**

We will continue to update this list as we receive news from individual Probate and Family Courts across Massachusetts implementing Standing Order 2-20.

State-Wide Advisories:

- [Probate & Family Court Standing Order 2-20: Court operations under the exigent circumstances created by COVID-19 \(amended as of 4/6/2020\)](#)
- [Open letter regarding co-parenting during COVID-19 from Chief Justice John D. Casey \(3/23/2020\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\): MA Probate & Family Court Operations During Coronavirus \(4/3/2020\)](#)

County-by-County Protocols for Implementing Standing Order 2-20 (as of 4/3/20):

- [Barnstable](#)
- [Berkshire When Court is Open](#)
- [Berkshire When Court is Closed](#)
- [Bristol](#)
- [Dukes](#)
- [Essex When Court is Open](#)
- [Essex When Court is Closed](#)
- [Franklin](#)
- [Hampden When Court is Open](#)
- [Hampden When Court is Closed](#)
- [Hampshire When Court is Open](#)
- [Hampshire When Court is Closed](#)
- [Middlesex](#)
- [Nantucket](#)
- [Norfolk](#)
- [Plymouth](#)
- [Suffolk When Court is Open](#)
- [Suffolk When Court is Closed](#)
- [Worcester](#)

For all Massachusetts court orders and advisories pertaining to the coronavirus, visit the state's page detailing the [Massachusetts court system's response to COVID-19](#).

## **UPDATED 4/3/20: Some Probate & Family Courts Closed Temporarily**

In addition to the restrictions under Standing Order 2-20, several Massachusetts Probate & Family Courts are closed completely until further notice, mostly likely due to quarantine procedures. For an up to date lists of closures, visit the state's page for "[Temporary court closures due to COVID-19](#)". Some of the courts that have been closed include following (with reopening dates included):

- Hampden Probate & Family Court (until 4/9/20)
- Worcester Probate & Family Court (until 3/30/20)
- Suffolk Probate & Family Court (until 4/7/20)
- Plymouth Probate and Family Court - Brockton (reopen date pending)

Please check the [state's temporary closures page](#) for up to date information.

## Out Other Coronavirus Related Coverage

For additional news and information about the Coronavirus, check out these blogs and pages:

- [Coronavirus News: Mass. Probate & Family Courts Release Tidal Wave of New Rules](#)
- [Coronavirus News: Enforcing Child Support and Alimony Orders During the Crisis](#)
- [Coronavirus News: County-by-County Info for Massachusetts Probate & Family Courts](#)
- [Massive Coronavirus Layoffs Trigger Child Support and Alimony Reductions Across MA and US](#)
- [Massachusetts Trial Court Announces Comprehensive Response to Coronavirus for MA Courts](#)
- [Coronavirus Court Closures: How Covid-19 is Shutting Courts in Divorce and Family Law Cases](#)
- [Can Coronavirus Fears Allow Parents to Cancel Court-Ordered Visitation?](#)
- [Surviving Coronavirus: Video Mediation for Divorce and Family Law Issues](#)
- [Court Filings and Covid-19: How to File Agreements in MA Probate & Family Courts During Crisis](#)
- All [Lynch & Owens Coronavirus Blogs](#)
- Our [Coronavirus Legal Services Page](#)

## UPDATE 4/1/2020: SJC Extends Statewide Court Closures to 5/3/2020 for Non-Emergency Matters

On April 1, 2020, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court extended its order closing Massachusetts courts to non-emergency matters through May 3, 2020:

- [Supreme Judicial Court Order regarding court operations under the exigent circumstances created by the COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) pandemic](#)

The order extends the March 15, 2020 order we covered in our blog on the [Massachusetts court system's response to thee coronavirus crisis](#).

## UPDATE 4/2/2020: Mass. Probate & Family Courts Provide New Guidance for Emergency Motions

On April 1, 2020, the Massachusetts Probate and Family Court Department released new guidance on the filing of emergency motions during the coronavirus outbreak:

- [Filing Methods for Emergency Actions as defined by Probate and Family Court Standing Order 2-20: Court Operations under the Exigent Circumstances Created by COVID-19](#)

The new guidance includes tables setting out the proper method for filing emergency [probate and health care proxy actions](#), as well as [guardianship matters](#), all of which are especially important at a moment when vulnerable populations (such as nursing home residents) are facing unique medical risks, and where children whose parents are hospitalized with the virus are creating an increasing need for guardianship of a minor appointments. The guidance provides email addresses for each county court, and expressly provides for the electronic filing of all emergency matters either by email or efilings. (For [209A restraining orders](#), individuals are permitted to file by email or in person.)

The guidance provides that emergency filings should be submitted by email in existing domestic relations cases:



In general, all emergency filings must be supported by an affidavit or sworn statement that demonstrates that an emergency or "exceptional/exigent circumstances" exist; however, the standard for what qualifies as an emergency is defined by individual courts on a county by county basis.

The [newly-released guidance](#) includes specific email addresses and phone numbers at each Massachusetts Probate & Family Court for litigants seeking to file emergency matters:

**Emergency Filing Contacts by County:**

- Barnstable [barnstableprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:barnstableprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (508) 375 6710
- Berkshire [berkshireprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:berkshireprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (413) 442-6941
- Bristol [bristolprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:bristolprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (508) 977-6040

- Dukes [dukesprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:dukesprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (508) 627-4703
- Essex [correspondences@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:correspondences@jud.state.ma.us) SALEM: (978) 740-4143, LAWRENCE: (978) 686-9692
- Franklin [franklinprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:franklinprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (413) 775-7460
- Hampshire [hampshireprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:hampshireprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (413) 586-8500
- Hampden [hampdenprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:hampdenprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (413) 748-7600
- Middlesex [middlesexprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:middlesexprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (617) 768-5800
- Norfolk [norfolkprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:norfolkprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (781) 830-1278
- Nantucket [nantucketprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:nantucketprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (508) 228-2669
- Plymouth [plymouthprobate@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:plymouthprobate@jud.state.ma.us) (508) 897-5400
- Suffolk [suffolkquestions@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:suffolkquestions@jud.state.ma.us) (617) 788-8300
- Worcester [worcesterpfc@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:worcesterwpfc@jud.state.ma.us) (508) 831-2200.

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**Jason V. Owens**  
Partner & Senior Counsel

## More Coronavirus Coverage from Lynch & Owens

The attorneys of Lynch & Owens have been blogging about the impact of the coronavirus on divorce and family law issues, as well as Massachusetts Probate & Family Courts, since the earliest days of the pandemic. Our coverage has been featured in the [New York Times](#) and the [Boston Globe](#). Check out the links below for more Covid-19 coverage from Lynch & Owens.

### *Coronavirus Impacts on Family Law:*

- [Nine Ways to Plan for Divorce During Quarantine](#) (5/13/20)
- [Ask Our Attorneys: How has the Coronavirus Impacted Family Law in Massachusetts?](#) (5/6/20)
- [Coronavirus News: Enforcing Child Support and Alimony Orders During the Crisis](#) (4/7/20)
- [Massive Coronavirus Layoffs Trigger Child Support and Alimony Reductions Across MA and US](#) (3/19/20 with updates)

- [Coronavirus Court Closures: How Covid-19 is Shutting Courts in Divorce and Family Law Cases](#) (3/14/20 with updates)
- [Can Coronavirus Fears Allow Parents to Cancel Court-Ordered Visitation?](#) (3/2/20 with multiple updates)
- *Massachusetts Probate & Family Court Updates:*
- [Coronavirus News: Mass. Probate & Family Courts Release Tidal Wave of New Rules](#) (4/9/20 with multiple updates)
- [Coronavirus News: County-by-County Info for Massachusetts Probate & Family Courts](#) (3/26/20 with multiple updates)
- [Massachusetts Trial Court Announces Comprehensive Response to Coronavirus for MA Courts](#) (3/15/20 with updates)
- *Mediation and Coronavirus:*
- [Mediation is the Best Divorce Option During the Coronavirus Crisis](#) (4/15/20)
- [Court Filings and Covid-19: How to File Agreements in MA Probate & Family Courts During Crisis](#) (4/9/20)
- [Surviving Coronavirus: Video Mediation for Divorce and Family Law Issues](#) (3/19/20)
- *Other media featuring Lynch & Owens and coronavirus:*
- [NY Times: For Divorced Parents, Navigating Coronavirus Is a Balancing Act](#) (3/27/20)
- [Boston Globe: For divorced couples with children, coronavirus creates added challenges](#) (4/10/20)

## Coronavirus Related Legal Services at Lynch & Owens

Lynch & Owens has adjusted our service delivery model in response to the coronavirus crisis. In addition to providing traditional divorce and family representation, during the outbreak, we are focused on delivering rapid-response legal services (including same-day service) to clients facing emergency financial and child-related issues, as well as assisting self-represented clients with document preparation and filings while the courts are closed for most regular business.

Clients can schedule same-day, 1-hour paid consultations with our attorneys by phone and we are accepting retainers as low as \$750 for additional consultation services. We are also offering same-day video mediation for parents, spouses and former spouses who are seeking to mediate coronavirus-related issues such as visitation, parenting time, and child support and alimony orders impacted by layoffs and unemployment. Our staff and attorneys have full remote access to all our office's resources in the event of mandatory quarantine or shelter-in-place order.

Please see our dedicated **Coronavirus Legal Services page** and [Coronavirus Mediation Services page](#) for more about services provided by Lynch & Owens and South Shore Divorce Mediation during the coronavirus crisis.

**About the Author:** [Jason V. Owens](#) is a Massachusetts divorce lawyer and family law attorney for Lynch & Owens, located in [Hingham](#), Massachusetts and [East Sandwich](#), Massachusetts. He is also a mediator for [South Shore Divorce Mediation](#).

**Schedule a consultation with [Jason V. Owens](#) today at [\(781\) 253-2049](#) or send [him an email](#).**

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