

**THESE POLICIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DAILY.
PLEASE CHECK THE COURT WEB SITE ON THE DAY OF YOUR
HEARING TO VIEW THE CURRENT POLICIES.**

Summit County Domestic Relations Court, Temporary Policies in Response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Public Health Crisis. REVISED Effective June 1, 2020.

On March 9, 2020 Ohio Governor Mike DeWine issued Executive Order 2020-01D “Declaring a State of Emergency” in response to the growing COVID-19 public health crisis. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 to be a global “pandemic” requiring “urgent and aggressive action” to control the spread of the virus.

Based upon these circumstances, Summit County Domestic Relations Court has developed a continuum of flexible responses during this public health crisis. The continuum of responses is intended to protect public health, to maintain essential court functions, and to continue to protect the rights of all individuals subject to the authority of the Court.

The following changes in court policies and procedures are made effective **Monday June 1, 2020**:

- 1) **Effective Monday June 1, 2020, all trials and evidentiary hearings will be held in-person unless alternative arrangements are made with the judge or magistrate assigned to that hearing. All other matters shall be held via Zoom. Any questions, please contact 330-643-2368, and please provide your email address at that time.**
- 2) Only counsel or parties or witnesses on a case with business before the court shall enter the Domestic Relations Court building. The only exception to this policy is that Parties may be accompanied by advocates or necessary support persons as required. **NO CHILDREN SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE COURTHOUSE UNLESS THE CHILD(REN) ARE SCHEDULED TO APPEAR AT THE COURT.**
- 3) **Any person who has been exposed to, or believes they have been exposed to COVID-19, or any person who is feeling ill, has a fever, or is experiencing any symptoms of illness shall not enter the Domestic Relations Court building.** All persons entering the building SHALL be subject to health screening by court or sheriff’s personnel. If any person who has a scheduled hearing is turned away, they must immediately notify the court by calling 330-643-2368 to make alternative arrangements for their appearance. COURT OR SHERIFF’S PERSONNEL ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR NOTIFYING THE COURT OF ANY PARTY’S INABILITY TO ATTEND THEIR HEARING.

- 4) Once in the Domestic Relations Court Building, any person who enters the Domestic Relations Court building and who appears to be ill, coughing, sneezing, or has a fever may, at the Court's discretion, be asked to leave the building and reschedule their hearing.
- 5) Any person seeking a Domestic Violence Civil Protection Order who is ill and unable to come to the courthouse in person due to that illness shall contact the court at 330-643-2368 to make alternative arrangements for that case to be filed.
- 6) Any persons entering the building shall maintain at least six-foot social distance between themselves and other persons.
- 7) All persons entering the courthouse building must wear a mask or face covering when entering the building or in any public areas. The wearing of masks in individual courtrooms will be at the discretion and direction of the judge or magistrate.
- 8) All sessions of the **Remember the Children Program in the months of April, May and June, 2020** are CANCELLED. The requirement to attend Remember the Children PRIOR TO THE HEARING is temporarily waived.
- 9) The Working Together Program and Positive Solutions Program for the months of **April and May, and June 2020** are CANCELLED.
- 10) If any hearings are authorized for remote attendance, the parties attending the hearing remotely shall connect to the Zoom conference link for the assigned magistrate or judge at the scheduled time of the hearing. A list of Zoom links for judge and magistrate hearings can be found on the court's web site www.drcourt.org. Click on the COVID-19 tab.
- 11) Before the day of the hearing, any parties or attorneys with scheduled hearings who are ill, in a high-risk category, or caring for a vulnerable person, or who are otherwise unable to attend a hearing in-person shall email the court to request either remote attendance or request a continuance of the hearing. Those requests shall be emailed to: hearings@drcourt.org with a copy sent to the opposing party or counsel. The assigned magistrate or judge will review the request and determine how to proceed.
- 12) Scheduled mediations or meetings with Family Court Services Evaluators will be conducted via Zoom video. Parties on these appointments shall not attend in person unless specifically directed to by the assigned court personnel. Connection instructions will be provided to the parties in advance of the appointment.
- 13) Meetings with Guardians ad Litem (GAL) may be conducted via telephone or remote video at the discretion of the GAL. Home visits, travel, or third party in-person visits by GALs may be conducted by agreement of the GAL and the parties. The GAL will inform the parties and will provide contact information for any telephone or video meetings.

14) Any person who needs to review a report of a Family Court Services Evaluator or GAL shall contact Family Court Services at 330-643-2355 to schedule a time to review the report. No person will be permitted to review the report without a scheduled appointment.

The current health crisis is a fluid situation and is subject to change as the situation dictates. The Court will post any updates and changes to the court website at <https://drcourt.org/wp/covid19/> A list of court contact phone numbers and Zoom video conference links is available on this web page as well.

June 1, revision