

Commonwealth of Virginia



JUDGES
CONSTANCE H. FROGALE, CHIEF JUDGE
THOMAS K. CULLEN

CLERK OF COURT
DOMINIKA A. BUI
703-746-4141

Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Franklin P. Backus Courthouse
520 King Street, 1st Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

To: All Practitioners and Court Users in the Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

From: Chief Judge Constance H. Frogale
Presiding Judge Thomas K. Cullen

Date: April 29, 2020

Re: Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (JDR) Updated Guidance due to the Supreme Court of Virginia's Third Order Extending Declaration of Judicial Emergency in Response To COVID-19 Emergency Dated April 22, 2020.

Effective April 26, 2020, to be consistent with the Supreme Court of Virginia's Emergency Declaration Orders, the JDR Court will follow this extension order and implement the guidance stated therein. These matters coincide with the Virginia Governor's Executive Order 55 that requires Virginia residents generally to stay at home until June 10, 2020.

The JDR court and clerk's office shall remain operational and provide services as required by law while, at the same time, maintaining protections for the health and safety of court users and personnel.

Essential and emergency cases, as defined in the Supreme Court's Order, are being heard. Emergency matters can arise from any type of case over which this court has jurisdiction, including (but not limited to) criminal cases, civil protective order cases, emergency child custody or child dependency and protection matters.

For all hearings or matters in emergency and essential cases, the attorneys and public are encouraged to participate remotely via two-way camera or via telephone conference call procedures, if appropriate and practical. Video conferencing for advisement of rights in adult and juvenile criminal cases has been implemented for individuals being held.

REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY AND/OR NON-EMERGENCY HEARINGS:

Pursuant to the Third Emergency Declaration Order (paragraph 4.), the JDR court, "may, in its discretion, hear any non-emergency matters, upon agreement of ALL parties, attorneys, and witnesses, by two-way electronic audio-visual communication system using a secure communication platform such as Polycom or WebEx, or by telephone. Any request to participate by telephone should be liberally granted."

The court will use its discretion to decide if it will hear any requests for either emergency matters (in addition to the cases noted above) or non-emergency matters on a case by case basis. Any such request(s) for a hearing(s) must be made through the clerk's office either by mail, fax, or hand delivered. The request(s) will be promptly reviewed by a judge.

REQUESTS FOR TELEPHONE OR REMOTE PARTICIPATION FOR HEARINGS:

Furthermore, any request(s) to participate via phone or two-way video will be determined on a case by case basis. Any such request(s) for a hearing must be made through the clerk's office either by mail, fax, or hand delivered. The request(s) will be promptly reviewed by a judge. Pursuant to the Emergency Declaration Orders, any request to participate by telephone should be liberally granted.

CIVIL CUSTODY/VISITATION AND CHILD OR SPOUSAL SUPPORT CASES CURRENTLY SET FOR ONE HOUR OR MORE BEFORE JUNE 10TH:

All custody/visitation, and child or spousal support civil cases set for hearings of one hour or more prior to June 10th, pursuant to the Emergency Orders, may be continued at the request of the parties or on the court's own motion. As an option, parties who wish to have a settlement conference may request the judge to have this opportunity prior to the next hearing date. The settlement judge, through the clerk, will arrange dates and times and how to proceed if they desire a settlement conference. This is a new option for parties that is designed to move cases forward that have been awaiting trial during the Covid 19 emergency. It is purely optional. Cases where no settlement conference is requested will have the trial/hearing dates converted to a status date only with the presiding judge. This status date may be conducted via telephone or video. At the status conference, the new trial/hearing date(s) will be scheduled.

JDR CLERK'S OFFICE:

The Clerk will continue to take court filings by fax transmission, mail, or in person for emergency and essential filings. All non-emergency and non-essential filings can be via mail or via fax transmission.

The Clerk's Office will continue to provide full services and answer questions to assist all court users during operating hours from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm.

Please be sure to contact the clerk for any questions, especially if there are questions regarding the court's response to the COVID-19 emergency.

Clerk of Court: Dominika Bui: Phone: (703) 746-4141. Fax: (703) 838-4092.