

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA  
24<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

**IN RE:           24<sup>TH</sup> Judicial District –  
DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL  
EMERGENCY – MAGISTERIAL  
DISTRICT JUDGE PROCEDURES**

**No. 2020 MD 300**

*Supreme Court  
No. 20 WM 2020*

AND NOW, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020, in order to ensure the orderly and safe operation of the Blair County Magisterial District Courts, and in accordance with the general statewide judicial emergency declared by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania on the 16th day of March 2020; and pursuant to Rule of Judicial Administration 1952(B), and the individual Judicial Emergency declared in Blair County by President Judge Elizabeth A. Doyle, the following procedures are enacted forthwith:

**Procedures for Blair County Magisterial District Courts March 16- April 14, 2020**

- Individuals appearing on warrant lists for costs and fines may be placed on new time payment plans and provided a pamphlet on the Epay system to encourage online payments.
- All Civil, Traffic and Non-traffic cases may be continued to a later date at the discretion of the MDJ.
- All landlord-tenant cases may be continued to a date in the near future at the discretion of the MDJ.
- Each MDJ will have the discretion to continue any criminal cases not involving incarcerated defendants.

- Each MDJ, in consultation with the Blair County Prison, will have the option to use ACT (including telephone) for preliminary hearings involving incarcerated defendants.
- Each MDJ shall also have the option to use ACT (including telephone) for any other court matters.
- The service of summary warrants for failure to respond, summons undelivered and failure to pay summary offenses shall be suspended until further notice from each respective MDJ. Nothing shall prevent the MDJ/Constable from notifying any defendant via mail of the existence of the warrant and advising the defendant that he/she may enter a plea via mail, fax, etc.
- The suspension of the applicable time lines for the scheduling of matters not involving incarcerated defendants will occur in compliance with the current guidelines issued by the President's coronavirus task force, which is attempting to slow the spread of the pandemic within the next 15 days.
- As each MDJ Court is uniquely situated and handles a variety of cases, these guidelines are intended to provide Blair County's Magisterial District Judges with sufficient discretion in scheduling. Additionally, it is noted that each MDJ Court facility has certain unique physical characteristics that will affect the Court's ability to provide for adequate "social distancing". Each MDJ shall practice social distancing and afford counsel adequate space to safely and confidentially meet with clients, including outdoor space (for non-incarcerated individuals).

The Blair County MDJ Courts shall remain open for court business pursuant to these procedures and individual measures taken by each MDJ to ensure the safety and health of themselves, their staff, the litigants, counsel, and the general public.

BY THE COURT:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth A. Doyle', written over a horizontal line.

Elizabeth A. Doyle  
President Judge  
March 18, 2020