

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS, BLAIR COUNTY
24TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

IN RE: 24TH Judicial District –

DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

**Supreme Court:
No. 20 WM 2020
Blair County No.:
No. 2020 MD 0003**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

**TEMPORARY PROTECTION FROM ABUSE INTERVIEWS; FINAL
PROTECTION FROM ABUSE HEARINGS**

AND NOW, this 3rd day of April, 2020, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Orders of March 18, 2020 and April 1, 2020, and the individual Judicial Emergency declared in Blair County by President Judge Elizabeth A. Doyle, the Court hereby **ORDERS, DIRECTS** and **DECREEES** as follows:

1. Interviews for Temporary Protection From Abuse ("PFA") Orders, either on the issue of whether an Emergency PFA Order should be converted to a Temporary PFA Order or whether a Temporary PFA Order should be issued upon original application, **SHALL** be conducted in every possible instance telephonically or by using other advanced communication technology, including e-mail, that limits in-person contact consistent with social distancing practices, as described by the Honorable Pennsylvania Supreme Court. No petitioner shall be compelled to advance their petition in person. The interview shall be conducted as soon as a judicial officer is available as assigned or as voluntarily available, and shall not be continued or delayed to achieve a different form of advanced communication technology.

2. Emergency PFAs MAY be converted into Temporary PFAs, or application therefore denied, by an ex parte proceeding which includes judicial review of the application for Emergency PFA without further contact with the petitioner.

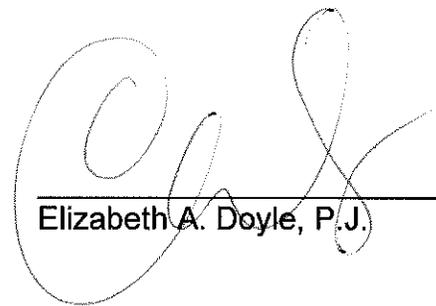
3. No person shall be denied an interview for a Temporary PFA because of being unable to participate by advanced communication; however, if a petitioner must be physically present social distancing shall be practiced and the proceeding held in the largest possible space with no non-essential personnel present.

4. Hearings on Final Protection From Abuse Orders SHALL be conducted in every possible instance telephonically or by using other advanced communication technology that limits in-person contact consistent with social distancing practices, as described by the Honorable Pennsylvania Supreme Court. No petitioner nor respondent shall be compelled to advance their petition in person. A hearing on a Final Protection From Abuse MAY be continued to achieve superior advanced communication technology upon motion of either party. Electronic images of exhibits MAY be admitted into evidence via any means of recording them. Witness SHALL be called by advanced communication technology in every possible instance. In the event that the petitioner or respondent and/or their counsel

must attend in person, social distancing shall be practiced and the proceeding shall be held in the largest possible space, with no non-essential personnel present.

5. The Court finds support for this procedure in the Second Supplemental Order entered by the Supreme Court on April 1, 2020.¹

BY THE COURT:



Elizabeth A. Doyle, P.J.

¹ Advanced Communication Technology

The court continues to specifically AUTHORIZE AND ENCOURAGE use of advanced communication technology to conduct court proceedings, subject only to constitutional limitations. Advanced communication technology includes, but is not limited to: systems providing for two-way simultaneous communication of image and sound; closed-circuit television; telephone and facsimile equipment; and electronic mail. See Pa. R.J.A. No. 1952 (A)(2)(e) & comment (citing Rule of Criminal Procedure 103 for the definition of advanced communication technology). *Second Supplemental Order of Supreme Court, 4/1/20*, p. 4 (emphasis supplied).