

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF STAFFORD  
IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF STAFFORD  
IN THE JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF STAFFORD

ORDER TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING IN-PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Order of the Supreme Court of Virginia and the States of Emergency declared by the President of the United States and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the judges of the Circuit, General District and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts of Stafford County located in the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit do hereby order as follows:

1. All Courts will remain open;
2. All Clerks offices will be closed to the public. Personnel will be available to respond to telephonic inquiries and to process electronic filings.
3. All in-person proceedings in all Courts are suspended from the close of business March 16, 2020, through the close of business April 6, 2020 subject to the exceptions below:
  - Proceedings necessary to protect constitutional rights of criminal defendants, including bond-related matters and plea agreements for incarcerated individuals;
  - Proceedings related to relief from abuse, including but not limited to orders of protection;
  - Proceedings related to emergency child custody orders;
  - Department of Children's Services emergency matters related to child protection;
  - Proceedings related to petitions for temporary injunctive relief;
  - Proceedings related to emergency mental health orders;
  - Proceedings related to emergency protection of elderly or vulnerable persons; ● Proceedings directly related to the COVID-19 public health emergency; ● Other exceptions as approved by a Judge of that Court.
4. The Judges of each Court are hereby authorized to determine the manner in which in person court proceedings for the exceptions listed above are to be conducted.
5. Any permitted in court proceedings shall be limited to attorneys, parties, necessary witnesses, security officers, and other necessary persons, as determined by the trial judge.
6. Throughout the suspension period. There shall be a liberal continuance policy.

Judges are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that core constitutional functions and rights are protected. Additionally, court clerks are charged with ensuring the court functions continue. Nevertheless, all judges and court clerks are urged to limit in-person courtroom

contact as much as possible by utilizing available technologies, including alternative means of filing, teleconferencing, email, and video conferencing.

This Order expressly does not prohibit court proceedings by telephone, video, teleconferencing, email or other means that do not involve in-person contact. This Order does not affect any court's consideration of matters that can be resolved without in-person proceedings.

Orders of protection and temporary injunctions that would otherwise expire between March 16, 2020 and March 27, 2020 are hereby extended until March 30, 2020.

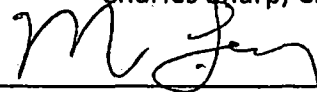
This Order is intended to be interpreted broadly for the protection of the public from the risks associated with COVID-19.

This Order may be shortened, modified, or extended as circumstances dictate.

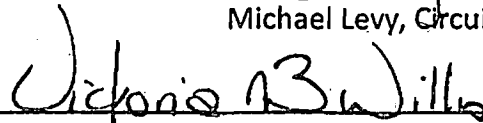
FOR THE COURTS THIS 16<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 2020



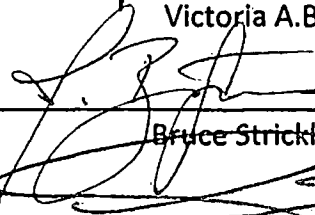
Charles Sharp, Circuit Court



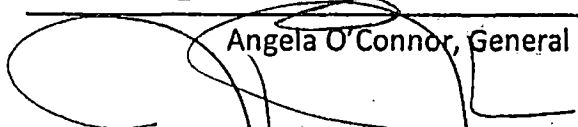
Michael Levy, Circuit Court



Victoria A.B. Willis, Circuit Court

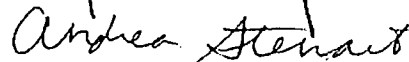


Bruce Strickland, General District



Angela O'Connor, General District

Julian Johnson, Juvenile & Domestic Relations



Andrea Stewart, Juvenile & Domestic Relations