

**In the Franklin County Municipal Court  
Columbus, Ohio**

**Administrative Order Number: 26-2020**

**Effective: November 25, 2020**

Administrative Order 23-2020 is hereby **RESCINDED** and replaced with the orders set forth herein.

The Findings of Fact stated in Administrative Orders 05-2020, 06-2020, 07-2020, 09-2020, and 10-2020 are hereby incorporated by reference into this Administrative Order, and are further supplemented as follows:

- I. In a public address on November 11, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine confirmed that Ohio remains in a state of emergency due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
  
- II. In testimony to the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, health experts including CDC Director Robert Redfield stated that circulation of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the influenza virus at the same time during the fall and winter months “could place a tremendous burden on the health care system.” CDC Washington, COVID-19: An Update on the Federal Response (Sep. 23, 2020). For these reasons, Dr. Redfield stated during a webinar with the Journal of the American Medical Association “the fall and the winter of 2020 and 2021 are going to be \* \* \* probably one of the most difficult times that we experienced [sic] in American public health.” Amanda Watts, CNN, CDC director offers bleak public health outlook for fall and winter, [https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-07-14-20-intl/h\\_0a1e9579c6acb8adc5a8cd454f221d59](https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-07-14-20-intl/h_0a1e9579c6acb8adc5a8cd454f221d59) (accessed Nov. 12, 2020).
  
- III. As of November 19, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health classified Franklin County as “severe exposure and spread,” after reporting an “unprecedented spike in hospital admissions due to COVID-19” on November 12, 2020. Ohio Department of Health, Covid-19 Update: Nov. 12, 2020, <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/resources/news-releases-news-you-can-use/covid-19-update-11-12-20> (accessed Nov. 12, 2020).

Based upon these Findings of Fact, the Franklin County Municipal Court hereby issues the following orders. This Administrative Order 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.

**THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

1. As set forth in this order, certain court sessions for matters before the Franklin County Municipal Court shall continue to be held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center at 400 North High Street in Columbus, Ohio.

**Traffic Arraignment**

2. Traffic case arraignments shall continue to be heard at the Greater Columbus Convention Center until March 31, 2021.

3. From the effective date of this Order, and until further order, when issuing traffic citations all Law Enforcement agencies are **REQUESTED** to fill out the Ohio Uniform Traffic Ticket so as to summons defendants to appear at the Greater Columbus Convention Center at 400 North High Street in Columbus, Ohio.

#### **Evictions**

4. Claims for restitution of premises shall continue to be heard at the Greater Columbus Convention Center until March 31, 2021.

5. The Clerk shall continue to limit the number of claims for restitution of premises scheduled on any day to no more than 100 cases, until further order.

6. In scheduling new claims for restitution of premises that will be heard at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, the Clerk shall schedule hearings as soon as practicable, notwithstanding the requirements of Local Rule 9.06 of the Franklin County Municipal Court.

#### **Weddings**

7. In order to protect the health and well-being of persons working in and visiting the Courthouse, weddings at the Courthouse are strongly discouraged until further notice. However, for weddings that do go forward, only six individuals may attend the wedding, in addition to the individuals being married.

#### **Filings with the Clerk of Court**

8. Until further order, in her discretion and in such manner as she deems appropriate, the Clerk of Court may receive any civil filing, including complaints for restitution of premises, by way of a "drop box" installed on the premises of the Franklin County Municipal Court.

9. Until further order, for any criminal case document which the Clerk is capable of receiving and accepting for filing by mail, fax, or other electronic means, the Clerk shall only accept such documents for filing by mail, fax, or other electronic means.

#### **Criminal arraignment**

10. Criminal arraignments for defendants who are in custody shall continue to be conducted in Courtroom 4D on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, until further order.

11. Beginning on January 4, 2021, criminal arraignments for cases in which the defendant is to appear in response to a summons shall be held in Courtroom 4C.

#### **Self-Help Resource Center**

12. The Self-Help Resource Center may continue to allow in-person visitors, subject to maintaining appropriate social distancing precautions necessary to protect staff and visitors. In the discretion of the Managing Attorney, the Center may offer limited services other than in-person, as much as practicable and considering staff and resource limitations.

#### **Jury service**

13. Except for cases in which the defendant is being held in custody, no jury trials shall be held from the effective date of this order until February 1, 2021, at the earliest.

**Entrance into facilities**

14. Administrative Order 09-2020 (face coverings, screening for temperatures and symptoms) remains in full force and effect, until further order.

11.25.20

**Date**

Ted Barrows

**Judge Ted Barrows**

**Administrative and Presiding Judge**