

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: LIMITED EXTENSION OF : EMERGENCY ORDER NO. 2020-16
JUDICIAL EMERGENCY FOR THE : 43 MM 2020
SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT - :
USE OF ADVANCED :
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY :
AND :
SUSPENSION OF RULE-BASED :
RIGHT OF CRIMINAL :
DEFENDANTS TO A PROMPT TRIAL :

ORDER

AND NOW, this 20th day of May, 2020, pursuant to the Supreme Court Orders of April 28, 2020 and May 27, 2020, which allowed the President Judge of any judicial district the discretion to extend the period of judicial emergency beyond June 1, 2020, and the Court finding:

that the incidence of COVID-19 infection is particularly high in institutional settings such as correctional facilities, including the Bucks County Correctional Facility and Community Corrections Centers (collectively referred to herein as “the Bucks County Correctional Facility”); and

that, due to the COVID-19 infection rate in the Bucks County Correctional Facility, the facility remains on limited medical lockdown; and

that a substantial number of defendants incarcerated in the Bucks County Correctional Facility are awaiting the scheduling of proceedings; and

that transportation of individuals incarcerated in the Bucks County Correctional Facility throughout the county for purposes of in-person appearance at proceedings poses an increased and avoidable risk of exposure to COVID-19 infection; and

that the Bucks County Department of Health has discouraged transportation of incarcerated individuals for court proceedings; and

that the above will result in significant delay for proceedings in matters involving incarcerated individuals and will have a substantial impact on the right of the accused to timely disposition of all matters.

Therefore, the Court, in the interest of preserving the right of the accused to prompt proceedings, and in the further interest of the safety of the public, the accused, and court, corrections and sheriff's department personnel, orders that the judicial emergency declared for the Seventh Judicial District is extended for the following, limited purposes:

Subject to state and federal constitutional requirements, the operation of Pa.R.Crim.P. No. 600 is suspended for the duration of the judicial emergency such that the time period from March 17, 2020 through the expiration of the judicial emergency shall be excluded from any time computation under Pa.R.Crim.P. No. 600.

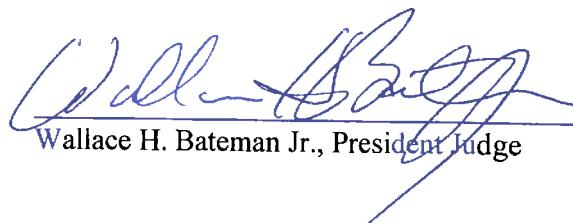
Further, subject to state and federal constitutional requirements, the operation of any statewide or local rules that restrict, directly or indirectly, the use of advanced communication technologies is suspended.

Pursuant to the above and subject to the discretion of the presiding judge, advanced communication technologies shall be used as available to conduct proceedings including, but not limited to:

- 1) All Preliminary Hearings, regardless of the custody status of the accused;
- 2) Non-trial Dispositions;
- 3) Miscellaneous Pre- and Post-trial Hearings;
- 4) Guilty Pleas; and
- 5) Hearings pursuant to the Post Conviction Relief Act.

This Order shall expire on August 29, 2020, unless extended by further order of this Court.

BY THE COURT:



Wallace H. Bateman Jr., President Judge