

Good afternoon:

There are many issues relating to operation of the courts during this emergency and I am sure everyone has procedural questions. I am hopeful that many will be addressed herein.

DOMESTIC CASES:

First and foremost, the public needs to understand the courthouse is not closed. This is a temporary operating schedule in response to public health concerns.

You will need to contact each judge's office with regard to cases currently scheduled. Each judge will make a decision about how to handle currently scheduled matters.

I am handling mine via Zoom and/or phone conference. Several members of the family bar association met last evening and we were given a tutorial on this easy to use format.

If you have a laptop, you can download the program. There is a free version as well as a paid version for 15.99 a month.

New cases being filed will follow the same procedure as usual with court dates being obtained from the assigned judge's judicial assistant.

For emergency issues and/or new filings of protective orders the duty judge schedule is as follows:

Week of March 22: Richmond County Judge Wright

Columbia County Judge Padgett

Week of March 29: Richmond County Judge Craig

Columbia County Judge Jolly

Week of April 5: Richmond County Judge Flythe

Columbia County Judge Jolly

Week of April 12: Richmond County Judge Wright

Columbia County Judge Padgett

Week of April 19: Richmond County Judge Craig

Columbia County Judge Jolly

Week of April 26: Richmond County Judge Flythe

Columbia County Judge Padgett

Judge Craig will handle all Burke County emergency matters during this time period.

Each Clerk of Court will be provided this schedule and requested to provide the email address of the Duty Judge's Judicial Assistant in order that Ex parte/New emergency matters can be promptly addressed.

The Judges are attempting to limit the number of contacts. We are requesting orders be sent via email for approval and signature. We are in the process of obtaining scanner/printers for administrative staff to use from their homes.

In the event of a TRUE emergency in a pending case, please email the judicial assistant of the assigned judge.

Our office has had a flood of calls regarding visitation with non-custodial parents during this time. Our general comment is to urge clients to use their common sense being mindful of protecting their children and not utilizing this emergency to thwart non-custodial parents visitation rights. The assigned judge not the duty Judge will address a TRUE EMERGENCY regarding visitation via telephonic conference scheduled through our judicial assistants.

CRIMINAL CASES:

During the pendency of the Supreme Court order, NO bonded criminal matters (unless emergency) will be heard without express approval of the assigned judge.

If there is a Jail case that needs any type of hearing, with an eye toward changing the status of a defendant,, i.e. likely probation or likely a transfer to DOC please contact the assigned judge's judicial assistant.

We want to thank everyone in advance for your patience and assistance in allowing our court system to still function efficiently and effectively during this time. It is our wish that everyone take all steps necessary to ensure safety and health are given top priority.