

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO
ROBERT G. MONTGOMERY, JUDGE

SPECIAL NOTICE RE: COVID-19

Effective March 31, 2020

As a result of the COVID-19 virus emergency, our filing process will change temporarily for cases that are physically paper-filed. E-filing remains available without any change in procedures.

After careful review and consideration of Governor DeWine's Executive Order 2020-01D declaring a state of emergency, of subsequent related orders issued by Governor DeWine and by the Ohio Department of Health, and of the guidelines and directives issued by the Supreme Court of Ohio regarding court operations during the present COVID-19 pandemic, in all cases which require paper filings, the court is currently accepting documents submitted via drop box or via U.S. mail or other commercial delivery service. However, pursuant to the most recent advisory guidelines received by the court from Columbus Public Health, there is evidence that the SARS-CoV-2 virus may survive on paper for up to forty-eight hours.

Beginning immediately, and in the interest of limiting potential spread of the virus and of protecting court personnel and the public, all paper filings submitted to the court by drop box or by mail are held for forty-eight hours after receipt prior to their processing and review.

The Franklin County Probate Court's drop box location is as follows:

Franklin County Government Complex, Ohio Probate Court, 373 S. High Street, Pavilion Entrance, Lobby near security, Columbus, Ohio 43215 (Southwest corner of Mound and South High Street)

No persons are permitted on the 22nd floor without prior approval of the Court.

The court's mailing address is:

Franklin County, Ohio Probate Court, 373 S. High Street, 22nd Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215-6311

Certain filings submitted under exigent circumstances shall be exempt from the holding period, including filings in the expedited or emergency appointment of a guardian; filings regarding temporary restraining orders; and other filings in respect of an immediate threat to an individual's person and/or estate. Requests to arrange for the exemption of a filing, or to physically appear in court, may be made by contacting the magistrates' assistant at 614-525-3896 to explain the exigent nature of the circumstances at hand.

This order shall remain in effect only for the duration of the present COVID-19 pandemic.¹

Please note that the court can only accept payment by money order or attorney's check at this time for paper-filed cases. Please call the court at 614-525-3894 to calculate your court costs. Blank checks will not be accepted. Payment by cash or credit card is not available at the court until further notice, except in the marriage department, which is able to accept credit/debit cards or cash with exact change tendered (\$65.00). E-filing payments remain unaffected by these temporary changes.

¹ Journal Entry and Court Order Setting Forty-Eight Hour Holding Period for Paper Filings, filed March 30, 2020, Franklin County Probate Court COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and Court Operations, Case No. 603535

The duty magistrate desk remains closed until further notice.

Court personnel are currently reviewing the hearing docket through May 1, 2020. You will be notified if your case is being continued to a later date.

Please contact the court's main phone number at 614-525-3894 to obtain information and availability for the Resource Center.

At present, marriage licenses will only be issued to those applicants who call the Probate Court in advance to set an appointment. Applicants should call 614-525-3108 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to schedule an appointment. Applicants are encouraged to postpone obtaining a marriage license due to the threat of COVID-19. However, if you will be getting married within the next couple of weeks, the Probate Court will still issue your marriage license, so long as legal requirements are satisfied, and applicants call in advance to schedule an appointment. Applicants are required to pay in cash with exact change (\$65.00) or with a credit/debit card (Visa, MasterCard, or Discover). Applicants with appointments should report to Meeting Hall A (auditorium) in the Franklin County Courthouse, 373 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio. Applicants will be health screened prior to proceeding to their appointment.²

Thank you for your assistance and understanding as we continue to serve the public during this difficult time.

[March 23, 2020 Covid-19 Court Order](#)

[March 30, 2020 Covid-19 Court Order](#)

[Court Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic FAQs](#)

² Journal Entry and Court Order, filed March 23, 2020, Franklin County Probate Court COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and Court Operations, Case No. 603535