

**Standard Operating Procedures for Paul E. Cozza**  
**November 1st, 2022**

As of March 7th, 2022, the Court will return to in-person hearings. All parties will be expected to appear in-person unless authorized by the Court to participate remote or unless otherwise specified below.

The following types of hearings shall remain fully remote unless an in-person hearing is requested:

- Show up termination of parental rights hearings only when they are scheduled without an associated permanency review hearing.
- Adoption hearings, unless the adoptive family requests an in-person hearing
- Any dependency or delinquency proceeding where all parties have agreed to a continuance in advance of the hearing. If there is an unrepresented litigant in the case, that litigant must be able to participate via advanced communication technology (Microsoft TEAMS) and attend the hearing virtually. All other requests for continuances should be made by motion.
- Other proceedings or hearings as determined by this court.

**Juvenile Proceedings**

All attorneys and persons appearing before Judge Cozza for Juvenile Court matters should comply with the following:

1. Download and be familiar with Microsoft TEAMS technology. It is critical for the Court to have the email addresses and cell phone numbers of the parties and lawyers, whenever possible. In the event of a technology failure you will be contacted.
2. Motions for Delinquency, Dependency and Termination of Parental Rights cases must be emailed to judicial staff in advance of the hearing. Please use the case name in the subject line of any email sent to judicial staff. Dependency and Delinquency Motions should be sent to [CostaR@alleghenycourts.us](mailto:CostaR@alleghenycourts.us),

[Sholt@alleghencourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghencourts.us) and [Mmalec@alleghencourts.us](mailto:Mmalec@alleghencourts.us). Any TPR Motions should be emailed to [CostaR@alleghencourts.us](mailto:CostaR@alleghencourts.us), [Sholt@alleghencourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghencourts.us). If all parties are in agreement with the motion, the Court may grant it without the need for a formal hearing. However, all counsel and/or parties must advise the Court of their position in writing. The presenting party should provide the Court with a copy of the Motion and include all attorneys/parties in the email.

3. Counsel should be aware that if they intend to call witnesses and/or have their clients participate in the proceedings virtually, it is their responsibility to forward the Microsoft TEAMS invite. Please note that Judge Cozza schedules an "Attorney Meeting" on each day that he hears Delinquency and Dependency court matters. This is a brief meeting where the Court attempts to resolve issues, grants or denies continuance requests and hears motions. On days when the Court is hearing dependency cases, the attorneys will be expected to attend a TEAMS meeting at 8:30AM. On days when the Court is hearing delinquency cases, attorneys and probation officers will be expected to attend a TEAMS meeting at 8:45AM. Attorneys should not forward this invitation to their clients or witnesses.
4. The Court will continue to allow certain professional witnesses to attend via phone or through Microsoft TEAMS. Any medical professional, or representative from the Allegheny Health Department may appear virtually or over the phone.
5. Counsel should be prepared to have any exhibits that they intend to enter into evidence during the proceeding scanned in a PDF format and properly labeled as an Exhibit. Counsel and parties should also be prepared to email the exhibit as an attachment during the proceeding, if admissible, to [Sholt@alleghencourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghencourts.us) and [CostaR@alleghencourts.us](mailto:CostaR@alleghencourts.us). Counsel for Termination of Parental Rights hearings may submit proposed stipulations and exhibits to [Sholt@alleghencourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghencourts.us) in advance of the hearing.
6. Pre-Trial Statements should be emailed to [Sholt@alleghencourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghencourts.us).



7. If you would like to request permission for a party to attend a hearing remotely, or have any technical difficulties, immediately email the court's judicial staff at the following email addresses:

[CostaR@alleghencycourts.us](mailto:CostaR@alleghencycourts.us)

[Sholt@alleghencycourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghencycourts.us)

### **Custody, Support, and other Domestic Relations Matters for Represented Parties**

1. The Court will hear non-emergency Family Division Motions on the monthly scheduled date. All Motions must be sent in advance of presentation to the judicial staff at the following email addresses: [CostaR@alleghencycourts.us](mailto:CostaR@alleghencycourts.us) and [Sholt@alleghencycourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghencycourts.us). Please indicate the date of intended presentation and include the case caption in the subject line. Any proposed orders should be in Microsoft WORD format. Parties will be expected to appear in-person for Motions hearings unless given prior permission to attend remotely. Additionally, counsel should provide the Court with the standard cover sheet attached to these Standard Operating Procedures labeled "Attorney Motion for Electronic Submission of Non-Emergency Motions".
2. Any party in a domestic relations matter wishing to present a consent motion/order to the Court for signature should contact judicial staff at the email addresses listed above and provide a copy of the motion/order and include the case caption in the subject line. The motion shall include a proposed order in Microsoft WORD. If all of these conditions are met, the Court will enter an Order and email copies to counsel and/or the parties. It is the responsibility of the petitioning party to file a copy of the order with the Department of Court Records.
3. Emergency Domestic Relations Motions should be presented to the sitting Motions Judge. If Judge Cozza is the Judge of record, the petitioning party must provide a courtesy copy to following email addresses:  
[CostaR@alleghencycourts.us](mailto:CostaR@alleghencycourts.us) and [Sholt@alleghencycourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghencycourts.us).

If Judge Cozza is the sitting Motions Judge and not the judge of record, the court requires the following procedures:

- If there is no objection to the Motion, the Court will enter an order and email the copies of the Order to counsel and/or the parties. The Court will file the original Order with the Department of Court Records.
- If there is an objection to the Motion, the parties must appear in-person for oral argument on Judge Cozza's Motions Day. In limited circumstances, the court may utilize Microsoft TEAMS to hear argument. The parties shall follow the protocol for remote hearings as set forth above.
- Counsel should attach the standard cover sheet attached to these Standard Operating Procedures labeled "Attorney Motion for Electronic Submission of Emergency Motions".
- The filing party must provide a courtesy copy of the Motion to the judge of record prior to its presentation.
- If the Court determines the motion is not an emergency, the Court will direct counsel and/or the party to notice and present the Motion on the judge of record's designated Motions Day.

### **Self-Represented Litigant Domestic Relations Motions**

1. All self-represented (pro se) litigants seeking to file a Motion relating to a domestic relations matters should utilize the Client Service Center. The information desk may provide litigants with contact information for this department and can direct them to the physical office if necessary. This is to ensure that the motions are in proper format (including proposed orders in Microsoft WORD) and that there has been proper service to all opposing parties.

Parties who do not wish to utilize the services of the Client Service Center will still be expected to follow the proper procedures and abide by the Local and State Rules of Court.

2. If the Motion is a true emergency, it should be presented to the sitting Motions Judge. The filing party MUST provide a copy of the motion to Judge Cozza's chambers via email at [sholt@alleghenycourts.us](mailto:sholt@alleghenycourts.us) and [Costar@alleghenycourts.us](mailto:Costar@alleghenycourts.us).
3. If the Motion is not an emergency, it will be scheduled on Judge Cozza's regularly scheduled Motions Day. Pro Se Motions are generally scheduled at 9:00AM. Failure to appear for the Motions hearing will result in the Motion being denied.

### **Custody Conciliations**

The Court will conduct all conciliations in-person. Attorneys should expect to attend conciliations in chambers and Pro Se litigants should expect to attend conciliations in a courtroom.

### **Custody Trials**

All custody trials will be in-person. Counsel/Parties will be notified by mail or email regarding the submission of a Pre-Trial Statement. In limited circumstances, the Court will allow for witnesses to appear virtually via Microsoft TEAMS. Any requests for virtual participation must be made in writing and in advance of the trial date. The Court will consider emergency requests on a case-by-case basis.

### **Exceptions**

Exceptions should be emailed to [Sholt@alleghenycourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghenycourts.us) and [Costar@alleghenycourts.us](mailto:Costar@alleghenycourts.us). The Court will issue a decision based on the record and the briefs. If the Court deems oral argument necessary, judicial staff will make scheduling arrangements with the parties.

### **General Chambers Information**



Judge Cozza's chambers are staffed daily from 8:00AM to 4:00PM. Emails and voicemails will be returned during regular business hours. The Court strongly urges litigants and attorneys to utilize the Fifth Judicial District's website which can be found at: [www.alleghenycourts.us](http://www.alleghenycourts.us). Should you have any questions about these Standard Operating Procedures or questions about scheduling, please contact judicial staff at the email addresses below:

Judicial Secretary

Roxanne Costa

[CostaR@alleghenycourts.us](mailto:CostaR@alleghenycourts.us)

(412) 350-7307

Judicial Law Clerk

Sarra Holt Terry

[Sholt@alleghenycourts.us](mailto:Sholt@alleghenycourts.us)

(412) 350-7307

**ATTORNEY MOTION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF  
NON-EMERGENCY MOTIONS**

**Presentation Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FD Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Petitioner's Attorney Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Respondent's Attorney Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**This matter is:**

- Consented to by all parties.
- Unopposed by all parties.
- Contested or unknown.

**Counsel must appear unless the following provision is checked and certified by the moving party. Otherwise, argument on this motion will be heard in person on the notice date in the motions courtroom.**

- I certify that the parties/counsel have agreed that this matter may be presented on the pleadings alone and that no oral argument is necessary.

***I understand that if all parties waive oral argument, the court will remove the motion from the list and will decide the motion on the pleadings submitted.***

**I understand that failure to complete and submit this form in full with my motion will result in the Court failing to consider the matter.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTORNEY MOTION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF  
EMERGENCY MOTIONS**

**Presentation Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FD Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Suffix:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assigned Judge:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Being Presented to Judge:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Petitioner's Attorney / Pro Se Information:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Respondent's Attorney / Pro Se Information:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Check One**

- This case is assigned to this judge and is a true emergency, and I am requesting a decision by end of business day.**
  
- This case is assigned to Judge \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ however, I am presenting it to the sitting motions judge as per the assigned judge's SOP's. I certify that I have served a copy of this motion on the assigned judge. (This procedure applies only to juvenile judge's assigned cases. In all other cases the matter should be presented electronically to the assigned judge).**

All adult judges and Judge Kim Clark will hear emergency motions on their assigned cases through electronic submission even if the assigned judge is not sitting in motions court on the date of presentation.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_