

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Effective February 2023

**The Honorable David L. Spurgeon
Court of Common Pleas, Allegheny County
Family Division**

440 Ross Street, Suite 506

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Phone (412) 350-0043

Fax (412) 350-0045

As of March 7, 2022, the Courts returned 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 parent rights hearing only when they are scheduled without an associated permanency review hearing.
- Bypass hearings, as scheduled by court administration.
- 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 on the case, the unrepresented litigant must be able to participate via advanced communication technology (TEAMS) to participate in the continuance request. All other requests for continuances should be made by Motion.
- Other proceedings or hearings as determined by this court.

Juvenile Court Proceedings

All attorneys and persons appearing before Judge Spurgeon should comply with the following:

1. Please use the case name in the subject line of any email sent to judicial staff.
2. Download and be familiar with Microsoft TEAMS technology and please practice using the TEAMS application prior to any scheduled matter.
3. Counsel should be aware that if they intend to have witnesses or any non-parties participate remotely in the proceedings that it is their responsibility to forward the Microsoft TEAMS invite. **All parties are expected to appear in person unless they have requested to participate remotely, and that request has been granted by the Court.**
4. 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, and prior to the hearing to mscherrah@allegheycourts.us.
5. Motions for Delinquency, Dependency and Termination of Parental Rights must be emailed to Judge Spurgeon's staff at mscherrah@allegheycourts.us, lpintar@allegheycourts.us The motions will be heard at 9:00 a.m. before the first docketed case on the judge's regularly scheduled day respectively. If all parties consent to a motion, the motion may be sent directly to the judge's staff for signature without presentation.
6. In the event you need to submit a motion, 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: mscherrah@allegheycourts.us, lpintar@allegheycourts.us

Custody, Support, and other Domestic Relations Matters

1. The Court will entertain non-emergency Family Division Motions in-person on the monthly scheduled date. All motions must be sent in advance of the presentation to the judicial staff at the following email address: motionsspurgeon@alleghenycourts.us. Please indicate in the email the date of intended in-person presentation and include the case caption in the subject line.
2. Any domestic relations issue where the parties are seeking a consent order, the parties may contact judicial staff at motionsspurgeon@alleghenycourts.us, mscherrah@alleghenycourts.us, lpintar@alleghenycourts.us. The copy of any Consent Motion shall be attached to that email and include the case caption in the subject line. The party presenting the Motion must indicate in the email that they have spoken with opposing counsel or the other parties and that opposing counsel and/or the other parties have no objection to the motion or consent to the motion. The Motion shall include a proposed order in WORD. If all of these conditions are met, the Court will enter an Order and email copies of the Order to counsel and/or the parties. The Court will file the original Order with the Department of Court Records.

Self-Represented Litigant Motions

1. Any self-represented litigant/pro se litigant (litigant without an attorney) who has an existing case in the Family Division and is seeking to file a Motion with the Court should appear at the Information Desk, Family Law Center, 440 Ross Street, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. (noon) to meet with staff from the Client Service Center. In addition, self-represented litigants/pro se litigants may call 412-350-5600 or email 1stFOP@PACSES.com

with questions about court procedures. **No legal advice will be given.**

2. The email address that the Court will utilize for all self-represented litigant/pro se litigant shall use the motionssurgeon@allegHENYcounty.us and litigants must include the date of intended in-person presentation and include the case caption in the subject line.

Custody Conciliations and PLC Modifications

The Court will be conducting all conciliations and PLC Modification Requests in-person.

Exceptions

The court will decide all exceptions on the filed exceptions and briefs unless the Court determines that an argument is necessary, in which case the Court will notify litigants/counsel and schedule a time and date in-person.

Should you have any questions about these Standard Operating Procedures or questions about scheduling, please contact judicial staff:

Secretary- Lori Pintar lpintar@allegHENYcourts.us 412-350-0043

Tipstaff-Matthew Scherrah mscherrah@allegHENYcourts.us 412-350-0044

Law Clerk-Ryan Tutera rtutera@allegHENYcourts.us 412-350-0041