

Standard Operating Procedures for Paul E. Cozza
(Effective 3/10/2025)

Advanced Communication Technology

All attorneys must be present in-person. 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 (via TEAMS) 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.
- Any dependency or delinquency proceeding where all parties have agreed to a continuance request. 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.
- Custody Conciliations with counsel and/or pro se litigants, unless requested by a party to be in-person.
- Other proceedings or hearings as determined by this court.

Juvenile Proceedings

All attorneys and persons appearing before Judge Cozza 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 matters.
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. For any/all motions related to Judge Cozza's Delinquency, Dependency, and/or Termination of Parental Rights proceedings must be emailed to staff in advance of the hearing. Dependency and Delinquency Motions should be sent to: MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us, GDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us, and Mmalec@alleghenycourts.us. Any TPR Motions should be emailed to: MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us, DDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us, HStecik@alleghenycourts.us, and GDelGreco@alleghenycourts.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. Motions will be heard thirty minutes before the first scheduled case on the judge's regularly scheduled day for that type of hearing.
5. 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.
6. It is imperative that Counsel officially enter a praecipe of appearance in each case before they appear in Court. In Juvenile Court matters, this must be done electronically through PACFile.
7. Pre-Trial Statements should be emailed to MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us, DDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us, and GDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us.
8. If you need to request permission for a party to attend a hearing remotely, or have any technical difficulties, immediately email the Court at the following email addresses:
PCozza@alleghenycourts.us, MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us, DDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us, and GDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us

Custody of Exhibits in Court Proceedings

Please review Rule 5101.4 Family Division Custody of Exhibits at the following link: [New-Local-Rule-on-Exhibits-Family-Divison.pdf \(alleghenycourts.us\)](https://www.alleghenycourts.us/new-local-rule-on-exhibits-family-division.pdf)

This rule applies to all proceedings before Judge Cozza. The party proponent of the exhibit is the court designated custodian of the exhibit. The only exception to this is when the proponent of the evidence is a self-represented (Pro Se/Litigant without an Attorney) litigant, in which case judicial staff will serve as the custodian of the exhibit.

Any party seeking to admit evidence must have each exhibit clearly labeled PRIOR to the proceeding. The party proponent of the evidence must be prepared to provide a copy of the exhibit or email the exhibit at the time of admission to Judge Cozza @ PCozza@alleghenycourts.us, MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us, DDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us, and GDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us. The party proponent may email the labeled exhibit to the above upon admission.

The party proponent of the evidence must also keep an index of the exhibits. This index must list, and all of the party proponent's exhibits, must be filed with the Department of Court Records (DCR) within five (5) business days upon the conclusion of the hearing. This index list must indicate whether the exhibit was admitted or rejected into evidence and provide a description or identification of the exhibit. The proponent is required to email court staff once this has been completed, as required by rule.

It is the responsibility of the proponent/custodian of the exhibits to maintain a copy of their exhibits, maintain a copy of the index/exhibit list, and to comply with this rule for all proceedings before Judge Cozza. Pay special attention to Rule 5103.4 as it relates to Special Provisions for certain exhibits.

Custody, Support, and other Domestic Relations Matters

1. The court will hear non-emergency Family Division Motions on the monthly scheduled date. All motions must be sent in advance of the presentation to the judicial staff at the following email addresses: MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us, DDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us, and GDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us. Please indicate the date of intended presentation and include the case caption and docket number 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.
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 the following email addresses: PCozza@alleghenycourts.us, MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us, DDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us, and GDelGreco@alleghenycourts.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.

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 Litigants

If you are representing yourself, you must prepare and submit your motion at the Information Desk in the rotunda in the Family Law Center, 440 Ross Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Self-prepared motions may be dropped off any business day that the Court is open, generally Monday through Friday, from 8am to 12pm. Please keep in mind that as a pro se client, you are acting as an attorney, who must comply with the legal process. Court staff in the Family Law Center are not permitted to provide you with legal advice. A resource sheet is available at the Information Desk with agencies that may be able to assist you. When submitting a completed pro se motion, please be aware of the following:

1. Your motion must be in the proper legal format, including a cover page (with a caption and your Family Division docket number), a motion asking for specific relief, a proposed order, and any relevant attachments (for example, if you are asking to change an order on your case, attach a copy of that order)
2. You will be asked to complete a demographic information sheet

3. You will be given a Notice of Presentation after your motion is scheduled, with the date, time, and location of your motions hearing where you must appear before the Judge. You will be required to serve this motion on the other party, so they have notice of the court date. You will also be required to file your motion with the Department of Court Records, 1st Floor City-County Building, 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Motions must be presented to the assigned judge. If the other party is represented by an attorney, you will also be required to notice and serve their attorney. If you are represented by an attorney, you will not be permitted to go through the Information Desk to submit your prepared motion, as your attorney of record will be required to follow the guidelines outlined in these Standard Operating Procedures for attorney motions. If your motion is not properly and promptly served, promptly filed with the Department of Court Records, and/or not in the proper form, please be advised that the Judge may deny your motion. If you have an emergency (this is generally defined as a time-sensitive or child safety issue), you may submit and file your self-prepared motion on the same day to the Information Desk at the days/times stated above. The staff will provide you with further information about how your emergency motion will be heard. Please be advised that this means the other party will not have notice or time to contest your motion, which means the Judge is unlikely to grant the relief unless there are compelling and special circumstances. Except in rare situations, the Judge will likely deny the emergency same day motion and require you to re-present it with proper notice to the other party.

Custody Conciliations

The Court will be conducting 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 Pre-Trial Statements. 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 MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us, DDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us, and GDelGreco@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 Chamber 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.

Please check the Fifth Judicial District's Website regularly for updates to these procedures and those of the Allegheny County Family Division.

Additional information and frequently asked questions can be located at the following links:

Frequently Asked Questions [Frequently Asked Questions - Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania \(alleghenycourts.us\)](http://www.alleghenycourts.us/frequently-asked-questions)

Family Division Forms [Forms - Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania \(alleghenycourts.us\)](http://www.alleghenycourts.us/forms)

Should you have any question about these Standard Operation procedures or questions about scheduling, please contact judicial staff at the email addresses below:

Judicial Administrative Assistant

Michelle Faiello

MFaiello@alleghenycourts.us

(412) 350-7308

Judicial Law Clerk

David DelGreco

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(412) 350-7310

Judicial Tip Staff

George DelGreco

GDelGreco@alleghenycourts.us

(412) 350-7309