

To: Mandy Wren, Richland County Bar Association
From: The Honorable DeAndrea G. Benjamin and The Honorable Alison R. Lee
Date: April 17, 2020
Re: Operations of the Richland County Court of General Sessions and Court of Common Pleas

Per the Supreme Court Order dated [April 3, 2020](#), directing the operation of state trial courts during the coronavirus emergency, beginning April 6, 2020, the Richland County Court of General Sessions and the Richland County Court of Commons Pleas are employing the following operations.

In the **Court of General Sessions**, guilty pleas, bond hearings, motions, competency hearings, and status conferences are presently being scheduled. Consent motions can be reviewed for signature without a hearing. Pleadings may be filed with the Criminal Records Division of the Richland County Clerk of Court from 10:00am until 1:00pm each day. A drop box is located on the first floor of the Richland County Judicial Center to accept filings. All matters requiring a hearing must be sent to the Chief Judge for Administrative Purposes, Judge DeAndrea G. Benjamin for review. Accordingly, forward all hearing and status conference requests to Judge Benjamin's judicial law clerk, Hazel A. Bridges at dbenjaminlc@sccourts.org.

All matters will be held on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of each week beginning at 10:00am using Remote Communication Technology for the remainder of April. The Solicitor's Office, Public Defender's Office, and private attorneys appearing on the docket will receive notice 24 hours prior to the hearing date. Thereafter, all parties will receive a Cisco Webex meeting invitation and videoconference instructions from the Presiding Judge. A General Sessions docket will be published for the week of May 11, 2020 and thereafter. Additional instructions will be sent on how the hearings will be conducted.

In the **Court of Commons Pleas**, minor settlements, death settlements, non-jury motions, injunctions, and status conferences via telephone are being scheduled during this time. All civil documents, pleadings, and necessary exhibits must be filed electronically for review by the Chief Judge for Administrative Purposes, Judge Alison Renee Lee. All requests for minor settlements, death settlements and status conferences with a proposed order should be sent to Judge Lee's judicial law clerk, Keisha Murray at aleelc@sccourts.org. If a hearing is required, it will subsequently be scheduled.

Rosters for Common Pleas non-jury (motions) and non-jury trials are being published. The first non-jury motions are scheduled for the week of April 27 to be conducted by video-conferencing using Cisco Webex technology. Additional motions rosters will be published for the week of May 11, 2020 and thereafter. Non-jury trials will begin the week of May 11, 2020 and a roster will be published shortly. Additional instructions will be sent on how the hearings and trials will be conducted.