

Coronavirus Update (March 27, 2020)

Hamilton County Juvenile Court and Office of the Juvenile Court Clerk

Order from the Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court
Continuing Suspension of In-Court Proceedings and Extension of Deadlines

[http://tncourts.gov/sites/default/files/docs/order - 2020-03-25t120936.486.pdf](http://tncourts.gov/sites/default/files/docs/order_-_2020-03-25t120936.486.pdf)

The attached Tennessee Supreme Court order suspends all in-person juvenile court proceedings except for emergency circumstances. The Hamilton County Juvenile Court is working diligently to plan how to handle the uncertainties of the next few weeks as well as to address any emergencies that may arise. Pursuant to the order, most in-person court hearings at Hamilton County Juvenile Court will be rescheduled. Following the recommendations of the Hamilton County Health Department and other public health agencies related to the COVID-19 virus, the Hamilton County Juvenile Court is taking appropriate further precautions.

Judge Rob Philyaw said: "It is our priority to continue to serve the community while meeting constitutional requirements and not diluting the essential governmental services we provide. At the same time, we are concerned for the well-being of children, citizens, staff and service providers on whom the Court relies."

On March 13, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tennessee Supreme Court declared a state of emergency for the Judicial Branch of government and put in place a suspension of in-person court proceedings for most matters and made other provisions for extension of deadlines. On March 25, 2020, that Order was extended through Thursday, April 30, 2020. In turn, Hamilton County Juvenile Court and the Office of the Juvenile Court Clerk have implemented the following:

- 1) Hamilton County Juvenile Court will remain open during regular business hours at both the Juvenile Courthouse located at 1600 East Third Street and the Child Support Division located at 1221 East Main Street.
- 2) The Court will only hear emergency child safety cases and constitutionally required matters.
- 3) Detention hearings will be held daily and constitutionally required or emergency cases will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis.
- 4) All other trials, appearances, settlement conferences and reviews will be continued. The court will notify parties as to when those cases will be reset for status.
- 5) The following programs and/or regular meetings will be cancelled until further notice:

Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Court
Hamilton County Juvenile Court Recovery Court
Hamilton County Juvenile Court Commission Meeting
Serious Habitual Offender Community Action Program Meeting
Foster Care Review Board Meetings
Child Support Clinics

6) Juveniles on probation, house arrest and any other program that requires regular meetings or telephonic reporting MUST continue to report by telephone and contact their probation officer prior to scheduled meetings for updates and/or rescheduling purposes.

7) Attorneys are encouraged to email, mail or fax pleadings to the Clerk's Office. The Court staff will determine when to schedule non-emergency petitions.

Update: On Friday, March 20, 2020 the Juvenile Court Clerk implemented new protocols that allow attorneys to submit filings via email to the Office of the Juvenile Court Clerk. Information is available [here](#)

<http://www.hamiltontn.gov/pdf/courts/juvenile/AttorneyAdvisory-Filingbyemail%203-20-20.PDF>

8) Court Security Staff are available at the front door of each location to answer questions and direct the public accordingly.

The Court is taking every reasonable precaution within the facilities to ensure the best sanitary practices. These include frequent disinfecting of all surfaces, restroom and waiting areas and encouraging staff members to strictly adhere to contact instructions promulgated by the health experts. This situation continues to evolve quickly and we will continue to monitor closely in order to make adjustments as needed.

For Court-related questions please call 423.209.5100.

For Clerk-related questions please call 423.209.5250 or Child Support Division 423.209.5300.

To report child abuse or neglect in Tennessee call 877.237.0004.

DCS Child abuse hotline: <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/child-safety/reporting/child-abuse.html>