

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE:

PUBLIC ACCESS TO REMOTE
PROCEEDINGS

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No. AD - 2021 - 43 - PJ

ORDER OF COURT

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DEPT OF COURT RECORDS
CIVIL/FAMILY DIVISION
ALLEGHENY COUNTY PA

FILED

AND NOW, this 26th day of March 2021, this Court continues to recognize the high number of positive COVID-19 tests in Allegheny County. Accordingly, it is hereby **ORDERED** that all Judges and Magisterial District Judges in the Fifth Judicial District shall provide remote public access to those proceedings that are being conducted remotely using Advanced Communications Technology rather than by in-person proceeding. Remote access shall be provided pursuant to procedures set forth on the Fifth Judicial District website.

Proceedings that were closed to the public before the COVID-19 pandemic will remain closed to the public regardless of whether they are conducted in-person or remotely, such as certain proceedings involving juveniles (see 42 Pa.C.S. § 6336) and incapacity proceedings (see 20 Pa.C.S. § 5511(a)). Judges also may close particular hearings or proceedings as allowed by legal authority.

When presented with legally sufficient, specific facts pertaining to privacy or safety concerns unique to a particular case, the presiding judicial officer may take reasonable steps to protect the privacy or safety of a victim or witness, including, but not limited to, allowing the victim or witness to be referred to with a pseudonym, interrupting the video and temporarily permitting testimony by

audio only, or requiring public viewing for that particular case or witness to take place in the courtroom rather than remotely.

Reasonable efforts, verbally or in writing, shall be made to remind the public that judicial proceedings cannot be recorded, transmitted or broadcast and of the consequences for doing so, essentially as follows:

It is unlawful and a criminal offense to capture, record, transmit or broadcast video, audio or photographs of any judicial proceeding. Violators may be held in contempt of court and may be criminally charged with a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment of up to two years for a first offense. See 18 Pa.C.S. § 5103.1; Pa.R.J.A. No. 1910; Pa.R.Crim.P. 112.

Subject to further order of court, the terms of this order shall remain in effect until June 30, 2021.

BY THE COURT:


_____, P. J.
Kim Berkeley Clark