

AMENDED TEMPORARY ORANGE COUNTY DEPENDENCY COURT PROCEDURES

Good Afternoon Everyone,

As I'm sure you are aware the news on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is developing daily at an increasing pace. The Court is closely monitoring this rapidly changing issue and taking precautionary measures. The health and safety of the public, attorneys and employees is a priority. To this end, I sent out a preliminary memo that beginning, March 17, 2020 we will implement temporary procedures in the Orange County Dependency Courts. This memo modifies the previous notice and will control:

- **TRIALS:** All trials in all Orange County dependency divisions scheduled from March 17 through March 31, 2020 are **cancelled** and will be reset for a later date.
- **SHELTER HEARINGS/ECOP:** Shelters and ECOP will be conducted telephonically via a conference call. The instructions for the conference call are below. If a parent appears in person at the courthouse they will be permitted in the courthouse but not in the courtroom. Instead the parent will be directed to call the conference call number. If they do not have a cell phone there is a phone in the lobby.
- **ARRAIGNMENTS, TPR ADVISORY HEARINGS and JUDICIAL REVIEWS:** These will be conducted telephonically via a conference call. The instructions for the conference call are below. If a parent appears in person at the courthouse they will be permitted in the courthouse but not in the courtroom. Instead the parent will be directed to call the conference call number. If they do not have a cell phone there is a phone in the lobby.
- **ADOPTIONS:**

DIVISION 7: Adoption hearings may be held telephonically with the adoptive parent(s) in the presence of someone authorized to administer the oath in their location. If there are circumstances that prevent a telephonic adoption hearing the attorney may contact the JA for direction.

DIVISION 3: Adoption hearings will be cancelled and reset.

- **WAIVER HEARINGS:** Will be handled on an individual basis.
- **OTHER HEARINGS:**

DIVISION 7: Unless otherwise notified, other types of non-evidentiary hearings will be conducted via telephone conferencing using the conference call procedure below.

If the hearing is not urgent or the timing not essential to the case, the parties are encouraged to reschedule it to a later date.

The Court will also review written Motions in chambers to determine if it can be ruled upon without a hearing. Please note the position(s) of all parties in the motion. If there is an objection, please state the *specific* objection and the basis for the objection in the motion.

In addition, opposing counsel may file a written response with their position within 24 hours. The Motion will then be addressed in chambers and an order entered as appropriate, subject to possible reconsideration as permitted by the Juvenile Rules of Procedure.

DIVISION 3: All other hearings, other than Emergency Shelter/ECOP Hearings, Arraignments, TPR AH, Judicial Reviews and Waiver Hearings, will be cancelled in Division 3 and reset by the JA or will be handled in chambers.

The Court will review written Motions in chambers to determine if it can be ruled upon without a hearing. Please note the position(s) of all parties in the motion. If there is an objection, please state the *specific* objection and the basis for the objection in the motion. In addition, opposing counsel may file a separate response with their position within 24 hours. These matters will then be addressed in chambers and an order entered as appropriate, subject to possible reconsideration as permitted by the Juvenile Rules of Procedure.

- **INTERPRETERS:** Interpreter services are not available for telephonic appearances. Parents requiring an interpreter for Shelter Hearings will be permitted to appear in the courtroom to use the interpreter headsets. All other parties will appear by phone. Parties requiring an interpreter for all other types of hearings should contact the Division JA for direction.

Getting the telephone conferencing information to the parents is important. I am asking the DCF case managers and CPI's to assist in providing this information for Shelter hearings and the attorneys to provide the information to their clients.

Telephone conference calls with up to 20 attendees can be accomplished by the moderator (Judge) calling 407-836-5646, and then entering the moderator code. Once the moderator code is entered, attendees can then join by calling the following phone number(s) and entering the participant code for the appropriate Judge or Magistrate.

**Phone number: 407-836-5646 (local)
Toll Free: 1-800-346-8020 (long distance)**

Conference Call Code for Division 7, Judge Doherty:

Enter Participant Code: 518523#

Conference Call Code for Division 3, Judge Craner:

Enter Participant Code: 517180#

Conference Call Code for General Magistrate Durnell:

Enter Participant Code: 893130#

Note: the # key must also be entered after the code numbers.

As we work through this unprecedented experience I want to thank all of you for your continued hard work and dedication. I'm sure there will be some bumps and frustrations along the way as we develop this process, but hang in there and we will get through this and learn along the way. Please don't hesitate to contact my Judicial Assistant with questions – we will do our best!

Again, thank you for all you do.

Patricia A. Doherty
Ninth Circuit Judge
Associate Administrative Judge
Orange County Juvenile Division

