



COVID-19: Filing Guidelines in the Supreme Court (Family Division)

Friday, March 27, 2020

Until further notice, the Supreme Court, including the Family Division, has adopted an essential services model. That means only urgent or essential matters are proceeding in court, and those will primarily be dealt with by telephone and video.

With that in mind, effective March 30, 2020, counsel and self-represented individuals should not file documents unless they are related to an urgent or emergency family law matter, as outlined in the [March 26, 2020, Scheduling Guidelines](#). For example, applications for uncontested divorces will not be accepted at this time. Consent orders will be accepted.

This is a change from current practice and necessary because, like many sectors, the judicial system is operating with significantly reduced staff. The staff available are focused on processing documents related to the urgent and essential matters that are proceeding

Documents related to matters not proceeding in the immediate future should be held until the court has resumed normal operations, as they will not be processed at this time. This decision will be reviewed on Thursday, April 9.

Due to the risk of COVID-19, unless a judge directs otherwise, the court will no longer accept paper copies of documents at courthouses. All filings must be made electronically by email or fax. A list of email addresses and fax numbers for the family courts are included at the end of this notice.

Phone numbers are also provided for inquiries as to whether a paper document will be accepted by the Court. **Generally, for the Court to accept a paper document, it must be demonstrated that a requirement to file only by fax or email will deny an individual access to the court.**

Please be assured the Court is considering new and innovative ways it may enable parties to continue managing important family law issues that do not meet the threshold of being urgent or an emergency.

The Court will provide ongoing guidance to the Bar and the public as to what matters the Supreme Court (Family Division) will consider urgent or an emergency, how the pleadings and related documents may be filed, and how the Court will schedule matters.

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