

## **The Judicial Branch is Expanding its Remote Capabilities**

(updated 7/28/20)

### **Supreme & Appellate Courts**

Connecticut's Supreme and Appellate Courts are hearing oral arguments remotely.

### **Civil**

Non-arguable motions marked take papers on civil short calendar 10 and all Indical calendars are being ruled on remotely by judges and processed remotely by clerks. Arguable motions on Indical calendars marked ready are being scheduled for a remote hearing on the record.

Civil pretrials, status conferences, trial management conferences, and judicial mediations are being conducted with judges and parties participating remotely.

Remote hearings on the record and remote court trials are being scheduled and conducted in identified civil cases.

A process is being developed to allow for summary process (eviction) cases to be mediated through video conference with a housing mediator. Housing stipulated agreement forms have been revised to eliminate the need for signatures, allowing mediators to draft agreements reached during remote mediations and forward them electronically to parties for review and for the court to review.

[Individuals may apply for civil protection orders](#) pursuant to C.G.S. § 46b-16a via email or fax as of April 3, 2020.

The [Connecticut Guide to Remote Hearings](#) for Attorneys and Self-Represented Parties has been published on the Judicial Branch website to assist parties participating in remote court events.

### **Family**

[Individuals may apply for temporary restraining orders](#) pursuant to C.G.S. § 46b-15 via e-mail or fax as of April 3, 2020.

Individuals may remotely request certified copies of their divorce decrees and certificates of dissolution effective June 2, 2020.

[Remote hearings in Family Matters](#) began being held by videoconference on June 24, 2020, including final agreements and uncontested dissolutions of marriage (divorces).

Parties who [have non-adversarial divorces or a temporary agreement](#) in most Family Matters may ask that those agreements be approved and ordered without having to appear in court.

Parties in [gestational carrier agreements](#) may request approval of their agreements, and the entry of pre-birth orders, without coming to the courthouse for a hearing.

Litigants who have e-filed their dissolution of marriage or legal separation case may remotely request a [qualified domestic relations order](#), which applies to the division of retirement assets.

[Family pretrials and status conferences are being conducted remotely](#) by judges. Family relations counselors are also providing status conferences remotely.

Parties who have a [final agreement](#) may have their family court cases [resolved without having to come to court](#).

Virtual courtrooms are now being set up to begin conducting limited hearings in Family Support Magistrate Matters.

### **Criminal**

Family Services staff are, via telephone, contacting domestic violence defendants and victims to complete matters previously referred for Assessment and Pre-Trial Supervision. These reports are sent to the state's attorney by way of a secure email box for the defendant's next scheduled court date.

A "nolle-and-prosecution-declined" docket has been established. The state's attorney provides a list each week of charges to be nolle to the clerk's office for docketing. The defendant and/or defense counsel's presence is not required, and notice of disposition is sent through the clerk's offices. This docket is heard every Wednesday. Notification to attorneys who filed appearances on cases scheduled for this docket will be notified through e-services.

All probable cause requests and orders are now conducted via email. The law enforcement agency emails the finding of probable cause request to the on call judge. The judge makes his or her finding on the form electronically and emails the form back to law enforcement.

Criminal courts are using [video conferencing](#) to allow for social distancing during arraignments. The participants in the criminal arraignments (the state's attorneys, the public defenders, and the bail staff) are all able to appear before the court and present information remotely via video conference from within their offices. Those individuals with new criminal charges also appear remotely before the court by video conference, either from the lockup or from a second courtroom with appropriate social distancing guidelines established.

The criminal courts are also proceeding on 54-56d matters (competency to stand trial) by way of [video conferencing](#), which allows for the transition of individuals with mental health issues to be placed back in a community setting with appropriate mental health care set up for them by the forensic evaluation team.

The criminal courts are conducting remote pre-trial conferences with a focus on cases in which a person is detained in custody on a pretrial matter. Utilizing the Microsoft Teams platform, the court conducts remote meetings with a judge, a prosecutor, and the defense attorney to see if an agreement can be reached in these matters and, if so, have it docketed for plea and disposition.

Remote hearings, including pleas and sentencing, for incarcerated individuals are being held using Remote Justice – Virtual Court technology on the Microsoft Teams platform and Video Conferencing on the Cisco platform.

### **Juvenile-Delinquency**

Juvenile Delinquency courts are using video conferencing (Cisco DX80) to allow for social distancing during arraignments. The participants in the court hearings (the state's attorneys, public defenders, and juvenile probation staff) are all able to appear before the court and present information remotely via video conference from within their offices. Those juveniles also appear remotely before the court by video conference, either from a juvenile detention center or from a designated area near the courtroom with appropriate social distancing guidelines established.

Delinquency pretrials, status conferences and judicial pretrials are being conducted with judges, prosecutors, public defenders and juvenile probation staff participating remotely through Microsoft Teams.

On the papers agreements are being ruled on, and if necessary, a remote hearing is being scheduled.

Clinical coordinators are working remotely to provide forensic clinical assessments for juveniles in detention and juvenile hearings are being conducted remotely.

### **Juvenile-Child Protection (CP)**

Participation in Orders of Temporary Custody Conferences/Preliminary Hearings is being done remotely via telephone.

All e-filed Withdrawals are processed remotely by court staff through the CP e-filing system.

E-filed Motions to Review Permanency Plans that are by agreement are processed remotely by judges and court staff through CP e-filing.

On the papers agreements are being processed and ruled on remotely, and if necessary, a remote hearing is being scheduled.

E-filed Motions for Continuation in Care are processed remotely by judges and court staff through CP e-filing.

Statewide (open and closed Superior Court for Juvenile Matters locations) CP case status conferences are conducted remotely using Microsoft TEAMS.

CP judicial pretrials are being conducted with judges and other parties participating remotely through Microsoft TEAMS.

As of June 8, 2020, all pending adoption petitions (open and closed locations) were finalized by take the papers.

All new adoption petition filings (statewide) are e-mailed to the open Superior Court for Juvenile Matters clerk's offices and finalized by take the papers without parties coming to the courthouse for a hearing.

The CP docket has begun hearing short calendar matters via remote videoconference, including permanency plan hearings, in court reviews, motions and dispositions.