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# COVID-19: CHANGES TO FAMILY LAW

## ***KENTUCKY HAS MADE SOME CHANGES TO HOW THEY WILL HEAR FAMILY LAW CASES DUE TO COVID-19.***

### **Domestic Violence and Interpersonal Violence Cases**

- Domestic abuse shelters are still open.
- All courthouses are open during normal office hours for you to file a petition requesting an interpersonal or domestic violence protection order.
- If you are unable to leave your home, or it is after hours, contact your local law enforcement to file.
- All interpersonal and domestic violence hearings will be held.
- If you are in the high-risk category for COVID19 or are remaining self-isolated, you are able to appear by phone. Contact the Court prior to (at least 24-hours) to let them know you are seeking to appear by phone.
- Per the most recent order of the Kentucky Governor and the Supreme Court of Kentucky: “In those limited circumstances requiring an in-person hearing, courtroom attendance shall be limited to attorneys, parties, necessary witnesses, and domestic violence advocates. No more than 10 people may be in the courtroom at any time unless the judge in his or her discretion deems it necessary and enforces appropriate distances between individuals.”

### **Child Support and Custody Matters**

- The Supreme Court of Kentucky and our local judiciary have ordered that all civil (except specific emergency issues) cases be continued until after April 24, 2020.
- Contact the local clerk’s office if you are unsure of whether your case is continued.
- Do not call the Judge’s office for a new date: their staff will contact you to reschedule.

### **Juvenile Matters**

- This includes juvenile offenders, paternity, and dependency, neglect and abuse dockets.
- Whether or not these matters will be heard depends on the nature or type of case and hearing. Contact the local juvenile clerk’s office.

**On March 27, 2020, the Supreme Court of Kentucky issued guidance in following parenting orders during this pandemic.**

- If a person tests positive for COVID-19, or shares a household with someone who tests positive, existing court orders on timesharing, visitation and parenting time shall be considered TEMPORARILY modified and suspends the parenting time for 14 days of the infected person.
- If a person is notified or comes to learn that he or she, or someone with whom he or she shares a household, has possibly been exposed to COVID-19, existing court orders on timesharing, visitation and parenting time shall be considered TEMPORARILY modified and suspends the parenting time for 14 days.
- If a party has within the last 14 days, traveled to any area with a CDC Level 2 or 3 Travel Health Notice, existing court orders on timesharing, visitation and parenting time shall be considered TEMPORARILY modified and suspends the parenting time for 14 days of the infected person.
- Finally, any party who is experiencing the above-listed circumstances shall, upon discovery, immediately notify the other party(ies).

If you are the parent whose parenting time is suspended, you SHALL (it is not up to the other parent, you are entitled to) granted liberal communication with the child(ren) subject to any restrictions specifically stated in the existing order(s). This can include text, Face Time (or other face to face social media) e-mail, letters, etc.

This order permitting modification is effective through *May 31, 2020* or until further Order of this Court.

***IF THIS DID NOT FULLY ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS. PLEASE CONTACT US BY CALLING 859-431-8200 DURING OUR LIVE HOURS MONDAY-FRIDAY 10AM-3:30PM OR VISIT [www.lablaw.org/apply-here](http://www.lablaw.org/apply-here) ANYTIME.***