

**STUART A. MINKOWITZ**  
Assignment Judge

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Message from Assignment Judge Stuart A. Minkowitz

I hope this message finds you and your families in good health. The COVID – 19 health crisis has required response and decision making of unprecedented proportion. The situation remains fluid but I wanted to provide information on where we are now. Under the leadership of Chief Justice Rabner and Acting Administrator of the Courts, Judge Glenn A. Grant, the judiciary has responded to this situation to ensure continuing access to the courts. While the situation remains ever-changing, I wanted to provide the following updates as to where we are now:

We are not having in-person proceedings, however, both emergent and non-emergent court operations continue. For attorneys and email capable pro se litigants, we have set up emergent e-mailboxes for emergent submissions only. Attorneys should use these emergent e-mailboxes for family, general equity and probate matters only. Those e-mailbox addresses are indicated below. eCourts is still available to attorneys for emergent and non-emergent civil and criminal case filings. Attorneys wishing to directly email judges during the national emergency must first request permission from that judge before doing so. Pro se litigants without access to email who wish to file emergent applications, can drop them off in a receptacle located in the vestibule of the Administrative and Records Building in Morristown, or the Justice Center in Newton. We are processing our drop off emergent and regular mail, but please be advised that in order to remain compliant with Department of Health guidelines, mail will not be processed for at least 24 hours after receipt. Once opened, it will be forwarded to the appropriate recipients. Because we will have limited staff in the courthouses at any given time, the processing of regular mail is going to be delayed by two to three days. We thank you in advance for your understanding and patience. We will not be accepting or processing any fax transmissions during this emergency, as we will not have sufficient staff within the courthouses to collect and distribute faxed documents.

Also, we are almost complete in moving to a remote environment where staff and judges can conduct the business of the courts, including on-the-record proceedings from off-site locations. As you can imagine, this is a herculean effort on behalf of our IT division, judges and staff. The technology has been slowly coming live, and many of the matters that historically required an in-person appearance will be done via video connection and streamed live on the Judiciary's NJCourts.gov website (<https://www.njcourts.gov/public/channels.html>). Meanwhile, some judges are currently conducting hearings by telephone or alternative video conferencing. Every judge's chambers phone is being answered, so please contact chambers if you have a question on your matter. If you get a voicemail recording, please leave a message as chambers staff is retrieving voicemail messages remotely.

As we fully rollout out virtual courtrooms, chambers staff will begin to reschedule emergent and non-emergent conferences and hearings. While all jury trials are suspended, there are many matters that can be handled virtually or on the papers. Please be advised, however, that we have a limited number of virtual courtrooms, so our Division Managers will be triaging matters and scheduling them for hearings as time becomes available. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding when notified of an upcoming event. Attorneys/parties must anticipate that the Court will not be able to accommodate specific dates and times requested. We ask that, to the extent possible, attorneys seek to resolve issues without resorting to motion practice. Indeed, the Court will endeavor to process consent orders and approve stipulated dismissals very quickly. Alternatively, whenever possible, we ask that parties consider waiving oral argument and submitting on the papers.

Applications for Domestic Violence TROs and Temporary Extreme Risk Protective Orders are still being taken at the local police departments.

All CJP and CJR first appearances, including weekday sessions, are being conducted virtually.

The following contact numbers have been established for each of the divisions:

Civil/General Equity: 862-397-5700 ext. 75345 (MRS) or ext. 75455 (SSX)  
Special Civil: 862-397-5700 ext. 75345 (MRS) or ext. 75455 (SSX)  
Criminal: 862-397-5700 ext. 75340 (MRS) or ext. 75316 (SSX)  
Family: 862-397-5700 ext. 75180 (MRS) or ext. 75184 (SSX)  
Probate/Guardianship (MRS): 973-285-6492 or 973-285-6491  
Probate/Guardianship (SSX): 973-579-0920

Morris County Emergent Mailbox: [MrsEmergent.mbx@njcourts.gov](mailto:MrsEmergent.mbx@njcourts.gov)  
Sussex County Emergent Mailbox: [SsxEmergent.mbx@njcourts.gov](mailto:SsxEmergent.mbx@njcourts.gov)

I want to thank all of you for your patience and cooperation. We will get through this by working together.

I will continue to update the Bar as new information becomes available.

Warmest regards,



Stuart A. Minkowitz, Assignment Judge  
Morris/Sussex Vicinage

