



Trial Court of the Commonwealth District Court Department

Administrative Office
Edward W. Brooke Courthouse
24 New Chardon Street, 1st Floor
Boston, MA 02114-4703

Paul C. Dawley
Chief Justice

TRANSMITTAL NO.	1279
Last Transmittal No. to:	
First Justices	1278
Other Judges	1278
Clerk-Magistrates	1278
Assistant Clerk-Magistrates	1278
CPOs	1278

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Court Judges, Clerk-Magistrates, Assistant Clerk-Magistrates, and Chief Probation Officers

FROM: Hon. Paul C. Dawley, Chief Justice

DATE: March 17, 2020

SUBJECT: **Amended District Court Standing Order on Court Operations - District Court Standing Order 2-20: Court Operations Under the Exigent Circumstances Created by COVID-19**

Attached is District Court Standing Order 2-20, which will become effective tomorrow, March 18, 2020. Standing Order 2-20 supersedes Standing Order 1-20 that was issued on Friday, March 13, 2020. Today, the Supreme Judicial Court ordered that each Trial Court Department issue an amended standing order to address the continued, emerging developments and public health concerns regarding the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. A copy of the Supreme Judicial Court's Order is attached. District Court Standing Order 2-20 is in keeping with the evolving best recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Public Health and is in line with the steps that other branches of Massachusetts Government are taking.

Standing Order 2-20 further limits those matters that will be heard in the District Court during this time to emergency matters. Apart from petitions for commitment pursuant to G.L. c. 123, § 35, the fitting of a GPS or SCRAM device as ordered by a judge, or the collection of bail, in all other emergency matters as established in Standing Order 2-20, only the judge, clerk, probation employees, and other necessary court staff shall be physically present in the courtroom; counsel, the parties, and other individuals necessary for the hearing shall participate by videoconference or telephonic conference call. All other new or previously scheduled non-emergency events shall be continued to a date after May 4, 2020 that is agreeable to the parties and the court or 60 days from the date of the scheduled event.

Each District Court has videoconference capability through Polycom with its own Polycom "bridge" number that can be accessed to join a videoconferencing event. Persons outside of the court, including attorneys and police departments, may participate in a Polycom videoconference by downloading the "Polycom realpresence mobile" app on their computer or other personal device and dialing the court's bridge number followed by "@204.130.103.19", i.e., [bridge#]@204.130.103.19. A list of each District Court's Polycom bridge number is

MEMORANDUM

March 17, 2020

Page 2

attached to this transmittal. Clerks's Offices should provide their Court's videoconferencing bridge numbers to police departments, attorneys, and other individuals who will be participating in an emergency matter by videoconference and direct that those parties download the Polycom app.

Each District Court also has a conference call phone number that will permit multiple parties to participate on a telephonic conference call. A list of each District Court's conference call phone number and login information is also attached to this transmittal. This list should likewise be provided to the police departments, attorneys, and other individuals who will be participating in an emergency matter by telephonic conference call.

All videoconferences and telephonic conference calls should be recorded on the courtroom FTR recording system.

Courts should be aware that, when a Polycom videoconference or telephonic conference call event is in progress, any party that has the bridge or login information may access that event. It is thus possible that multiple parties on multiple different matters may be on the line at the same time. To the extent possible, Clerk's Offices should stagger an event that is scheduled to be heard on videoconference or telephonic conference call to its own time slot so as avoid distractions by parties joining the event for an unrelated matter or putting too much stress on the system bandwidth.