



TWENTY-SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

STATE OF LOUISIANA

ST. TAMMANY PARISH JUSTICE CENTER
701 NORTH COLUMBIA STREET, ROOM 3068
COVINGTON, LOUISIANA 70433

DAWN AMACKER
DISTRICT JUDGE
DIVISION "L"

ST. TAMMANY
WASHINGTON
PARISHES

March 27, 2020

Dear Members of the Bar:

I hope all of you are safe and well. While we are all waiting for courts to fully be brought back up, I will keep you informed of new developments as quickly as possible. Here are a few.

Family Court

A. Protective Orders

Through the cooperative efforts of our Court; Melissa Henry, Clerk of Court; and Kim Kirby, Executive Director of Safe Harbor, the following procedure has been set up for the continued filing of protective orders. If you know of anyone requiring the protection of the Court, please encourage and help them to file electronically. If the assistance of a lawyer is not available, any person who requires protection from abuse for themselves or their children should be referred to Safe Harbor's 24 hour crisis line (985) 626- 5740 or 1 -888-411-1333. Safe Harbor has arranged to assist parties at a scheduled time with the electronic filing of the appropriate LPOR forms. Some of our local attorneys have volunteered to provide notary services gratis during this time to Safe Harbor including Jessica Karr, Patti Oppenheim and Ellen Creel. The Governor has provided for remote notarization by proclamation attached hereto. I am sure more attorneys are needed. Please contact Safe Harbor or one of these attorneys if you can volunteer.

In St. Tammany Parish, the Clerk's office is facilitating the waiver of electronic fees for the protective order filings. Instructions can be found on the Clerk's website at e-file St. Tammany Parish Clerk of Court.

Our sincere thanks go out to Amanda Trosclair, one of the Court's Hearing Officers, who has coordinated all of these joint efforts to protect parties at risk.

B. Supervised Visitation

The Sheriffs of both parishes have now let us know that they are no longer able to provide officers to handle custody/visitation supervision. This will obviously be a real hardship on our clients since alternatives are generally not available in those situations. If your clients can agree on another supervisor, that should be an acceptable solution temporarily. You should place this in writing, as agreed to between the parties and the attorneys and, if possible, file a motion and order electronically to amend the earlier court order.

C. Divorces

Many of your clients have shown an interest in getting divorced timely. The procedure in both family divisions will be as follows:

Until further notice, the family court divisions will continue to grant uncontested La. C.C. art 103 divorces that are submitted in accordance with Court appendices to the State District Court Rules. Attorneys may submit La. C.C. art 102 divorces, in accordance with appendices, on or prior to the assigned rule date. The court will evaluate the submission of the 102 documents on a case-by-case basis. If the court determines that a 102 divorce is appropriately filed and the parties agree to submit, then the divorce may be granted without the requirement of a court appearance. Attorneys should file a letter, along with the other required documents, indicating that all parties agree to the granting of the divorce.

D. Hearing Officer Conferences

We ask that you do not telephone Connie Berner, the HOC coordinator, regarding re-sets of currently scheduled HOCs and/or rule dates until further notice.

We are also requesting that you notify her by email if you have filed a continuance or have a Consent Judgment that resolves the issues for the HOC. Her email is cberner@stpgov.org

Civil/Criminal Court

A. Judge Garcia's Docket – Division "D"

We currently do not have a judge appointed by the Supreme Court to replace Judge Garcia. As soon as court dates are assigned, a judge pro tempore will be appointed. In the meantime, you may call the Division's number previously listed and matters will be handled by the available duty judge or one of the other judges as needed.

B. Trials

The judges are receiving a lot of inquiries about the dates for trials and re-serving witnesses. At this point, we are awaiting further orders from the Supreme Court, those will be not be re-set. As soon as we receive them we will forward that information on to you.

C. Judge Scott Gardner – Division "G"

Anyone who needs a court setting with Division G via Zoom, please email dcarter@stpgov.org.

Thank you for your patience. We remain available to answer your questions in all divisions.

With kindest regards,



Dawn Amacker
Chief Judge, 22nd Judicial District Court
Washington and St. Tammany Parishes