



D. GREGORY CARR  
JUDGE

DAVID RIGLER  
JUDGE

SCOTT D. LANDRY  
CHIEF JUDGE

JAYNE A. PEMBERTON  
JUDGE

VANESSA L. JONES  
JUDGE

M. DUNCAN MINTON, JR.  
JUDGE

LAURA G. GRIFFIN  
CLERK OF COURT

# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Twelfth Judicial District

## Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

for the County of Chesterfield

7000 LUCY CORR BOULEVARD

CHESTERFIELD, VIRGINIA 23832

PHONE: (804) 748-1379 FAX: (804) 717-6043

May 11, 2020

### **Re: Court Access and Docket Revisions for the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court for Chesterfield County and the City of Colonial Heights**

“We’re all in this together.” Important words to remember as the Court community takes steps toward restoring access to justice. It’s “imperative we live up to the sentiment” commented one editorial. We ask for your commitment toward this work of restoration.

Restoration begins with increased access on May 18th and followed by full access on July 6th. Several docket revisions shall commence on July 6th. The revisions address the significant case backlog. Other changes promote informed choice.

The following is “imperative” for counsel:

- Review and understand the dockets.
- Be prepared and ***present when your case is called.***
- Engage in some meaningful attempt to resolve matters.
- Whenever possible resolve by consent order.
- Dissuade attendance by spectators to your case – especially in civil matters. Limiting courthouse visitors is critical.
- Submit motions for remote participation if appropriate.
- Refrain from continuances.
- Provide letters of representation in advance.
- Forward timely written requests for an interpreter or Guardian ad litem or other preliminary matters and provide the reason(s) for the request.
- Provide available or avoid dates in consideration of the docket, i.e. don’t provide available dates not included by the schedule.
- ***Immediately respond to inquiries from the Clerk’s Office.***
- Be clear and concise in Court. The Court has limited available time.

The access provisions set forth are consistent with and in furtherance of the recent Order of the Chief Justice for the Supreme Court of Virginia and the public safety plans developed by the Sheriffs of Chesterfield County and the City of Colonial Heights. These provisions will be subject to modification upon the issuance of additional Orders by the Chief Justice or notification of public safety concerns.

**Effective May 18<sup>th</sup>**, the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Courts for Chesterfield County and the City of Colonial Heights shall commence hearing matters as previously scheduled *except as notified otherwise*. In addition, the Court will continue to:

- receive requests regarding emergency matters;
- conduct hearings for emergency matters such as protective orders, abuse and neglect proceedings and motions granted for expedited hearings;
- receive requests regarding non-emergency matters;
- at the discretion of the Court conduct hearings regarding non-emergency matters either in person or by remote means;
- conduct arraignments and bond hearings for incarcerated individuals;
- hold detention hearings and reviews for juveniles detained; and,
- receive waivers of preliminary hearings and guilty or no contest pleas with agreed dispositions or agreement as to evidence to be offered for disposition to the Court.

In Chesterfield County, dockets will be compressed and heard in Courtrooms 1, 3 and 5. The Duty Docket will occur in Courtroom 3. All other matters will be heard in Courtrooms 1 and 5. One judge will preside in each Courtroom for the day. On a rare occasion, one judge may sit for the morning and another judge will sit in the afternoon.

Both Sheriffs shall ensure compliance with social distancing and entry requirements. Deputies will require submission to a temperature screen and responses to inquiries regarding possible exposure and explanation of purpose for visit. Anyone denied admittance will be provided contact information for assistance.

The Department of Juvenile Justice’s Continuity of Operations Plan precluded Court Service Unit from receiving non-emergency initial petitions. The bench understands that the Court Service Unit will resume receiving non-emergency initial petitions May 18<sup>th</sup>, by appointment only. Walk-in filings will not be accepted at this time. In Chesterfield County, please call intake at 804.748.1372 to schedule an appointment. In Colonial Heights, please call 804.520.9355.

The Clerk’s Office in Chesterfield County will see visitors by appointment only. Please see the Clerk’s Office website for more information on how to schedule an appointment ([www.chesterfield.gov/jdrcourt](http://www.chesterfield.gov/jdrcourt)). In Colonial Heights contact the Clerk’s Office at 804.451.0213.

**Effective July 6<sup>th</sup>**, both Courts will commence hearing all matters, both previously scheduled and recently filed. Also, the Court in Chesterfield County will resume hearing matters in all courtrooms.

**In Chesterfield County**, docket modifications include allocation of time for matters, the commencement time, the addition of dockets, and provision of additional instructional information. A "case" refers to all matters pertaining to the parties involved. A "matter" refers to a pending petition, motion, warrant, summons or capias. Description of each docket follows:

- **General Civil Docket:** M/W/F (8:30 AM – 12:30 PM) - 8 cases per hour
- **Expedited Motions Docket:** M/W/F (1:30 PM – 2:00 PM) - 2 cases
- **DSS Docket** (10:30 AM – 11:30 AM every day in “Duty” Courtroom) for 5-day preliminary hearings, (11:30 AM – 12:30 PM one day per week in each Courtroom) for adjudications, dispositions, permanency or other matters, and other times as may be scheduled.
- **Show Cause Docket:** Once a month per judge (8:30 AM – 3:30 PM) - 6 cases per hour.
- **Contested Civil Docket:** M/T/W/TH (2:00 PM) - 1 case
- **DCSE:** M/W (8:30 AM – 3:30 PM in one courtroom) - 6 cases per hour.
- **Criminal/DV/Delinquency:** T/TH (9:00 AM – 12:30 PM) - 6 cases per hour.
- **Criminal/DV/Delinquency:** F (2:00 PM – 4:00 PM) 6 cases per hour.
- **Duty Docket:** M/T/W/TH/F; includes the following:
  - Juvenile Traffic, Curfew and Arraignments (8:30 AM)
  - Adult Arraignments for those not held (9:00 AM)
  - Juvenile Detention Hearings (10:00 AM)

- Abuse and Neglect 5-day preliminary hearings (10:30 AM)
- Video Arraignments for those held and Bond Hearings (11:30 AM)
- Emergency/Expedited Hearings (12:00 PM)
- Protective Order Requests (2:00 PM)

**Parties for the General Civil Docket** will complete an intake form and view a brief instructional video in the public meeting room on the first floor. The form inquires whether a party is represented by counsel and if so, by whom. Parties indicate their preference for resolving the matters – whether by withdrawing their request, entry of an Order reflecting the agreement reached, referral for mediation, or for the Court to decide later.

- *Withdraw:* Petitioners endorse and submit a withdrawal request for review by the assigned judge.
- *Agreement:* Parties indicating an agreement has been reached are directed to a large conference room on the second floor. An easy fill-in-the-blank and check-the-box form permits parties to indicate their agreement terms. Then the parties go to the assigned courtroom and present the Order for entry.
- *Mediation:* Parties choosing mediation are directed to an interview room on the second floor to schedule the mediation. They will also receive information regarding the required parenting education course and notice of a court date set after the scheduled mediation. Those unable to resolve all matters by mediation will return to Court on the status date to submit a certificate of completion for the parenting education course and to schedule a court date.
- *Dispute:* Those requesting a determination by the Court will be Ordered to complete the required parent education course and receive notice for their next appearance. The next appearance is a status hearing where the petitioner should submit a certificate of completion for the parenting education course; appearance is required. Upon proof of compliance, the Court will schedule the contested hearing.

Counsel are not required to attend the general civil docket. As previously noted,

- Provide a letter of representation. Include any requests such as for an interpreter or Guardian ad litem or other preliminary matters and provide the reason(s) for the request.
- Provide available or avoid dates in consideration of the docket, i.e. don't provide available dates not included by the schedule.

The General Civil Docket or Triage Docket will be piloted on four dates prior to July 6th commencing June 15th. All parties for this Triage Docket will be required to appear at Court on the hour, e.g. a summons will require attendance at 8:00 AM for the 8:30 AM docket in order to ensure intake completion. All forms and information shall include a Spanish translation.

The process for seeking expedited or emergency relief will remain the same. The form request is available by contacting the Clerk's Office at 804.748.1379, or by accessing it online at [www.chesterfield.gov/jdrcourt](http://www.chesterfield.gov/jdrcourt).

**In the City of Colonial Heights:** The docket will remain as before COVID-19 except for the addition of the following dockets: Criminal/DV/Delinquency: F (2:00 PM – 4:00 PM) – 6 cases per hour.

Restoration will take time. Yes, we're all in this together and it's imperative that we live up to the sentiment. On behalf of the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court for Chesterfield County and the City of Colonial Heights, I am

Sincerely,



Scott D. Landry, Chief Judge