

In light of AO 114-20 issued by J. Marks, effective May 26, 2020, the Queens County Surrogate's court is providing the following update regarding procedures for pending and newly filed matters.

Court staff continues to be physically located at the NYC Civil Court building and shall remain at that location until the main civil courthouse on Sutphin Blvd reopens. The location is staffed each day by approximately three individuals who are primarily tasked with opening mail, answering phone calls and e-mails, as well as processing emergency filings delivered at the court.

Personal interaction between staff and the public will continue to be minimized. It cannot be over emphasized that personal appearance at the court is discouraged. While it may be possible to physically drop off documents at a receptacle provided for that purpose, personal discussions about matters between staff and counsel is not possible at this time. Communication with the clerical staff has proven to be most effective if conducted by e-mail and we have ensured that the e-mail contacts for all departments are listed on the Queens Surrogate's court's website. **Counsel should ensure their e-mail information on file with the court is current.**

Most importantly, given the fact that the court has e-file capabilities, **ALL NEW FILINGS AUTHORIZED BY AO 114-20, AS WELL AS ANY FURTHER SUBMISSIONS REQUIRED IN CURRENTLY PENDING MATTERS MUST UTILIZE THAT SYSTEM.** Staff have been provided with proper equipment, now have access to all files, and will be working remotely for the foreseeable future regardless of the court's location. While delivery of documents by mail is technically possible under limited circumstances, there will be significant delays in matters processed in this fashion compared to matters that are e-filed. It is also **strongly suggested** that counsel familiarize themselves with the use of the e-filing system as it is anticipated its use will not only be continued but expanded in the future.

In accordance with the directives of Chief Judge Difiore, matters in which a decedent's death has been caused by the Covid virus will be given priority.

Parties in matters on the Preliminary and Pre-Trial Conference calendars will be contacted by a member of the law department to arrange future virtual conference dates. Therefore, counsel must familiarize

themselves with the use of the video and audio features of the SKYPE for Business system. A court sponsored link is available for testing in this regard.

Matters on the court's process calendars for April and May have been administratively adjourned. Petitioners will be contacted by staff from the respective departments and given a "process calendar" date on which their matter will be placed. These will be administrative appearance dates.

**Personal appearances will not be required.**

Procedures on how to:

- obtain decrees for matters in which citations issued but are uncontested
- supplemental service of citations
- conduct 1404 and 2211 examinations
- further adjournments

will be provided prior to the calendar date.

Motions will be given a briefing schedule or marked submit if all opposition and reply papers are in the file at the time of the calendar date. The court will contact the parties if a virtual oral argument is desired.

All information, as well as court forms and contact information will also appear on the Queens Surrogate's Court general website which is:

[nycourts.gov/courts/11jd/surrogates](http://nycourts.gov/courts/11jd/surrogates)

It is anticipated that in the coming weeks and months physical access to our permanent offices will become available for staff and the public. Further information regarding changes to applicable procedures necessitated by such developments will be provided at that time.

Please stay safe and healthy

*Peter J. Kelly*

Surrogate  
Queens County

