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I hope this letter finds you and your families in good health and spirits. While we may be adversaries in court, we are all citizens of this great metropolis that is in the grips of an unprecedented pandemic. Our joint commitment to the rule of law requires us, particularly in these trying times, to work together to ensure a consistent approach to matters pending in the courts. In that spirit, I am providing some updates on the status of the Tort Division and procedures we have implemented.

To aid social distancing, at least for the weeks of March 23 and 30, all Tort Division staff are working from home. We have instructed our staff to not e-file any documents given the suspension on non-essential filings under Administrative Order 78, and would hope you would do the same.

For matters that are already filed, and where this office is in a position to serve responsive papers, we have asked our staff to obtain consent from parties to serve papers by email and will consent to like requests during the filing suspension. And, as you may have noticed, the Law Department has posted a notice in the New York Law Journal, and on our website at www.nyc.gov/law, that its service window is closed and papers can instead be served by email at ServiceECF@law.nyc.gov until April 19, 2020.

Given the disruption, as directed under Administrative Order 71, this office is also using best efforts to obtain 90-day extensions of responsive and motion deadlines by stipulation, and has directed staff to consent to like requests. And when this crisis passes, this office will act consistently with the directive of Administrative Order 71 that, no party will be penalized for discovery delays related to the crisis. We urge that you do the same.

We hope that you find this information helpful and would ask that your members proceed in a consistent manner, so that the interests of our clients and the common good are protected during these trying times.

Please periodically check our website for updates at www.nyc.gov/law. If you have any questions, please email me at FLeoussi@law.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,

FAY LEOUSSIS
Chief, Tort Division