

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
THE HONORABLE STEPHEN A. CORR

CONTACT WITH CHAMBERS

Judge Corr permits counsel to contact his Judicial Assistant and Law Clerk by telephone, email, or regular mail on routine procedural issues. However, except as indicated in the Standard Operating Procedures regarding the scheduling of conferences and oral arguments, such contact should be kept to a minimum. Counsel should first consult with the Judge's Standard Operating Procedures and the local and state rules prior to any such contact to determine if the issue is addressed in them. When communicating with Chambers by email or regular mail, all counsel and unrepresented parties must be copied on the written communication.

Except as specifically authorized in the Judge's Standard Operating Procedures, direct contact with Judge Corr should be handled by the filing of motions, petitions or other pleadings with the appropriate filing office.

CONTINUANCE REQUESTS FOR CRIMINAL CASES

AS OF JANUARY 1, 2023, all continuance requests regarding criminal matters shall be sent directly to the Chambers of the assigned Judge. **PLEASE NOTE: The subject line of the email must begin with “Request for Continuance”, along with the name and docket number of the matter.** If the subject line does not begin “Request for Continuance”, your request may not be timely addressed. Please submit all continuance requests to Judicial Assistant, Dawn F. Nurney at dfnurney@buckscounty.org.

Continuance requests must be in writing and received not less than 72 hours prior to hearing the matter. Otherwise, all parties must appear in court on the scheduled date. The position of the Assistant District Attorney must be obtained and provided in the email continuance request. Attorneys must enter their appearance in the Clerk of Courts Office prior to submitting a request for a continuance. If you have not entered your appearance or provided the position of the ADA, Judge Corr will not consider the request.

Continuance requests for ARDs, Summary Appeals and any other matter not assigned to a specific Judge will continue to be submitted to calendarfax@buckscounty.org.

CHILD WITNESSES IN CUSTODY CASES

The children who are the subject of a custody case and any other children residing in the applicable households are not to be involved in the preparation or presentation of the case until and unless that has been specifically authorized by Judge Corr. This means that they should not be told anything about the case by anyone nor should they even know that a court matter is pending.

Unless previously authorized, Judge Corr does not hear the testimony of any child who is the subject of a custody case until all other testimony and evidence has been presented.

In no circumstance should children be brought into the courtroom for any matter without pre-approval from Judge Corr. Participants in court proceedings are reminded that the court staff is not responsible to monitor any children and if any participant brings a child to the Justice Center with them, it is their responsibility to bring another responsible adult who will be able to monitor the child while the litigant is in the courtroom.

COURTESY COPIES

Judge Corr expects all pleadings, motions, petitions, and memorandums of law to be filed in a timely manner, and therefore courtesy copies should not be necessary in the normal course of business. However, if a pleading, motion, petition, or memorandum of law is filed shortly before a scheduled conference, hearing, or trial, a courtesy copy of the document may be forwarded by email to Judge Corr's Judicial Assistant and Law Clerk, with a copy to all counsel and unrepresented parties.

CONFERENCE MEMOS

Judge Corr expects that each party will submit a Conference Memo to Chambers at least three days prior to any scheduled conference. Conference Memos may be submitted by email (preferred) to Judge Corr's Judicial Assistant and Law Clerk, or by regular mail. Please select one and only one method to transmit them to the Court. Conference Memos can be in the form of a letter addressed to the Court. All Conference Memos submitted to the Court should be transmitted to all other counsel and unrepresented parties in the same manner as they are transmitted to the Court.

Conference Memos should briefly describe the issue or issues to be discussed at the conference and should indicate the position of the submitting party with respect to those issues. Conference Memos should not exceed five pages.

Conference Memos should not be filed with the Prothonotary or Clerk of Courts and do not become part of the record in any case. Conference Memos are designed solely to assist Judge Corr in preparing for the conference.

COURTROOM PROCEDURES GENERALLY

1. All counsel and parties should know and follow the applicable Pennsylvania Rules and the Bucks County Local Rules.
2. Counsel of record or self-represented parties shall be well prepared and personally attend all court appearances unless express permission otherwise has been granted by the Court. All persons, including witnesses, shall be prompt and appropriately attired.

3. There should be always a heightened sense of civility in the Courtroom. All attorneys are to be civil to one another and to all parties and witnesses. When in Court, attorneys and parties should refer to each other, Court personnel, and/or anyone else in the Courtroom, by their last name or title only (Mr. Jones, Ms. Smith, defense counsel, etc.).
4. At the outset of a hearing or a trial, counsel shall place on the record the complete caption of the case for the benefit of the Court Reporter. Counsel shall also state and spell their name, indicate any firm affiliation and state which party or parties they represent in the action.
5. Counsel and unrepresented parties are generally expected to stand when addressing the Court. When speaking, counsel and unrepresented parties shall address the Court, not the opposing party or counsel.
6. The Court welcomes submission of legal authority. Please bring a copy for Judge Corr, his law clerk, and provide a copy of any such submissions to opposing counsel and/or parties who are unrepresented.
7. The Court prefers parties to exchange exhibits before a trial or a hearing begins. Therefore, if they have not already done so, the parties should arrive in Court early and confer with one another regarding the exhibits. It is the duty and responsibility of the litigants to bring sufficient copies of all exhibits.
8. The Court believes that the parties should be able to stipulate to many facts, and, therefore, at the beginning of the case or controversy, the parties should precisely set forth the following:
 - a. Subject matter and nature of the dispute
 - b. Stipulations of fact which are necessary to develop a record, but which are not contested
 - c. A precise statement as to what is being contested and each party's position regarding each matter contested
9. Objections should be stated formally and responded to formally. When objecting, counsel should only state "objection" and the legal grounds for the objection. Do not offer extensive argument or explanation unless requested to do so by the Court. Do not use objections for the purpose of making a speech, recapitulating testimony, or attempting to guide the witness.
10. Counsel and all parties are **expected** to make a good faith effort to communicate with each other and discuss potential resolution or settlement terms **prior** to any hearing or trial. If the parties believe a conference with Judge Corr would facilitate such resolutions, they should advise the Judge's staff in advance or the Court at the time the hearing or trial is called from the list.

11. Any exhibit any party or counsel intends to use should have sufficient copies made in advance so that there is at least one copy for each counsel or unrepresented party plus one for the witness and one for the Court. For jury trials, counsel shall have enough copies of all exhibits they may want to be passed to the jury or go with them during deliberations, so that each juror and each alternate will have his/her own copy. Unless and until an exhibit is admitted into evidence, however, the contents thereof **shall not** be revealed to the trier of fact (Judge or Jury) except to the limited extent revealing it to the Judge is necessary for a decision on admissibility. Once admitted into evidence, in non-jury proceedings, the Judge will read all exhibits. Therefore, there is no need for any witness or counsel to read it to the Court.
12. If any party or counsel plans to use any of the audio/visual or electronic equipment in the Courtroom, they are expected to contact the appropriate court personnel to assure that the equipment will be available in the courtroom on the date of trial. They also are expected to coordinate with court staff to assure that the equipment is working prior to the start of the proceeding.
13. Counsel should exchange their lists of experts and the substance of their testimony prior to the beginning of any trial or hearing, or else risk having that expert barred from giving testimony. On critical issues, experts should be specifically asked if they hold their opinion to a reasonable degree of certainty within their field of expertise.
14. Proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law can be very helpful in non-jury trials. They should be submitted in writing and electronically in Microsoft Word format and sent via email to Judge Corr's Judicial Assistant. In addition, they should be filed with the Prothonotary.

SCHEDULING IN NON CRIMINAL MATTERS

Initial scheduling of hearings or trials is handled by filings with the Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts or Clerk of the Orphans Court, who in turn forward matters to the Court Administrator's Office.

CONTINUANCES IN NON CRIMINAL MATTERS

Requests for continuances of matters on any Trial or Arbitration List are handled by the Court Administrator's Office. The procedures can be found on the [Calendar Office page](#).

Requests for continuances for any Orphans Court matter shall be directed to the Administrative Judge of the Orphans Court.

Requests for continuances for matters specifically scheduled before Judge Corr, other than Orphans Court matters, should be addressed to the Judge's chambers by email or regular mail. No such requests will be considered unless in writing. Continuance requests must be sought as soon as possible. Continuances are not favored. Counsel must have good cause for any

requested continuance. All requests for continuances must indicate the steps counsel has taken to seek the approval of all other counsel or unrepresented parties. The position of all other counsel or unrepresented parties to the request should be stated in the letter making the request.

CONFERENCES

Conferences on cases assigned to Judge Corr, other than Orphans Court cases, should be arranged by contact with the Judge's Judicial Assistant. Judge Corr is willing to hold conferences to assist in the routine pre-trial processing of cases or to consider possible settlement of cases. Generally, conferences are only scheduled where all parties are represented by counsel. Conferences are normally held in chambers and are not on the record except when specifically ordered by the Court. Judge Corr prefers conferences to be in-person, but conferences can be held by telephone when all parties agree and the person making the request can arrange for the conference call.

When requesting a conference, counsel should indicate the purpose for the conference, the length of time requested and the position of the other counsel as to having a conference. In addition, the person requesting the conference should be prepared to provide the Judge's Judicial Assistant with dates and times when the participants will be available.

For all Pre-Trial or Settlement Conferences, actual trial counsel and all individual parties shall be physically present unless specifically excused by Judge Corr. If there are any entities that are parties in the case, the person or persons with final decision-making authority for the entity shall be physically present at the conference, or readily available to counsel by telephone, unless specifically excused by Judge Corr. In any case where there is an insurance carrier that has any control over the resolution of the case, the person or persons with full decision-making authority for the insurance carrier shall be physically present at the conference, or readily available to counsel by telephone, unless specifically excused by Judge Corr. Any requests for any person to be excused shall be made in writing immediately after notice of the conference is first given. Late requests will ordinarily not be considered.

Requests for conferences in Orphans Court cases shall be made by Motion in accordance with the local Orphans Court Rules.

PROPOSED ORDERS

Should Judge Corr request a proposed Order following a hearing or settlement conference in any type of matter, the proposed Order shall be submitted to Judge Corr's Chambers by email in Microsoft Word format by counsel for the parties as they shall determine or as the Court shall designate. Proposed Orders shall first be copied to all other counsel or unrepresented parties. If the proposed Order is by agreement, please confirm in the email accompanying the proposed Order that all parties have reviewed and are in agreement to that which is being submitted.

Kindly be timely in your submission of any proposed Order so that the Court's Judicial Assistant is not required to follow up after the deadline for submission has passed.