

NOTICE TO THE BAR

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS – SUPREME COURT’S MARCH 27, 2020 OMNIBUS ORDER CONTINUING THE SUSPENSION OF COURT PROCEEDINGS AND EXTENDING DEADLINES AND TIMEFRAMES THROUGH APRIL 26, 2020

The Supreme Court on March 27, 2020 issued an omnibus order regarding the Judiciary’s response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus public health crisis.

Over the past few weeks, the Court entered a series of orders and notices suspending certain court proceedings, extending deadlines, and tolling time periods because of the practical impossibility of continuing business as usual during this unprecedented emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The omnibus order extends numerous of those provisions – including the suspension of jury trials, Landlord/Tenant calendars, and all Municipal Court sessions – through April 26, 2020.

In addition to those continuations, the Court’s March 27 Order also takes a number of new steps. In Civil matters, the Order extends deadlines to additional areas, including for filing affidavits of merit in medical and professional malpractice cases and for various types of discovery, and it tolls time periods for lack of prosecution dismissals and discovery end dates. It also suspends trial calendars in the Special Civil Part and Small Claims. In addition, the omnibus order modifies the provisions of the Court’s March 25 Order by increasing to 35 pages the threshold for requiring the filing of courtesy copies (rather than 25 pages).

The March 27 Order provides that depositions may be conducted remotely using video technology and that court reporters may administer and accept oaths remotely. It also relaxes the provisions of any Court Rule that requires original signatures so as to permit the use of electronic signatures where authorized during the COVID-19 crisis.

In attorney disciplinary matters and fee arbitrations, the omnibus order tolls the periods for grievances and authorizes email submissions to the Office of Attorney Ethics. It also extends the deadline for submitting an application to take the July 2020 bar exam.

As noted, the actions set forth in the omnibus order are temporary and in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The order establishes a consistent end date of April 26, 2020 for nearly all provisions.

The Supreme Court’s March 27 omnibus order, along with all prior orders and notices regarding COVID-19 are available on the Judiciary’s public webpage (njcourts.gov).


Hon. Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.

Dated: March 29, 2020