

FULTON COUNTY  
PENNSYLVANIA  
FILED

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APR 28 2026

PROTHONOTARY, CLERK OF COURTS,  
CLERK OF ORPHANS COURT,  
REGISTER OF WILLS, RECORDER OF DEEDS

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF THE 39<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF  
PENNSYLVANIA - FULTON COUNTY BRANCH**

*In Re:* Fulton County Prothonotary, Clerk ) Misc. Docket No. 15-2026 MCP  
of Courts, Recorder of Deeds, )  
Register of Wills, and Clerk of the )  
Orphans' Court )

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

**AND NOW**, this 28<sup>th</sup> day of **April, 2026**, Fulton County, Pennsylvania, is one of two counties, along with Franklin County, Pennsylvania, which encompasses a judicial district collectively and legally recognized as the 39<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. See 42 Pa. C.S. § 901(a). Our judicial district is served by a common Court Administration office and five commissioned Common Pleas Judges, one of whom is the President Judge who by statute is responsible for the oversight and management of court operations. See, e.g., 42 Pa. C.S. § 325; 42 Pa. C.S. § 911(a).

Under Pennsylvania Law, the offices of the Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills, and Clerk of the Orphans' Court in Fulton County are held by a single elected official. See, e.g., 42 Pa. C.S.A. § 2738; see also PA. CONST. art. IX, § 4. Following the early retirement of the prior elected official, Ms. Patty Suders Fix, Ms. Stephanie Sherman assumed the position on an interim basis for all the filing offices on or about October 1, 2025. Ms. Sherman was elected by the citizens of Fulton County for all filing offices on November 5, 2025. Ms. Sherman's four-year term as the head of the filing offices became effective on January 1, 2026.

*Stephanie Sherman*  
CLERK OF COURTS  
ATTEST: A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY

The duties and obligations of the various filing offices are established by statute and various rules of procedure, including but not limited to the following:

- Prothonotary – 42 Pa. C.S. §§ 2731 – 2738, 42 Pa. C.S.A. § 2704
- Clerk of Courts – 42 Pa. C.S. §§ 2751 – 2757, 42 Pa. C.S.A. § 2704
- Clerk of the Orphans’ Court – 42 Pa. C.S. §§ 2771 – 2777, 42 Pa. C.S.A. § 2704
- Recorder of Deeds – 21 P.S.A. §§ 151 – 152, 53 Pa. C.S.A. § 8862
- Register of Wills – 20 Pa. C.S.A. §§ 901 - 911, 20 Pa. C.S.A. §§ 921-925

The filing offices of Fulton County are also subject to various Rules of Appellate Procedure which significantly impact both the Court, and litigants’ appeal rights. See, e.g., Pa. R.A.P. 108, Pa. R.A.P. 301, Pa. R.A.P. 903, Pa. R.A.P. 905, and Pa. R.A.P. 1931(c), (d), (e), and (f).

The President Judge of each Judicial District is authorized to ensure the proper operation of the Courts, which is dependent upon the “accurate and timely creation, maintenance, and certification” of court records. 42 Pa. C.S.A. § 2704 (responsibility for entry, maintenance and certification of data and certification of amicable judgments). Since October 1, 2025, the President Judge and his chambers’ staff have personally experienced failures on the part of the Fulton County Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, and Clerk of the Orphans’ Court. The President Judge has experienced both improper maintenance of case files and untimely transmission of documents and filings. The President Judge has also received multiple complaints from Common Pleas Judges, attorneys, other elected officials of Fulton County, the District Court Administrator, Court staff, and the public regarding many of these same deficiencies in operations, chiefly the failure to timely file and distribute orders and pleadings to counsel, litigants, interested individuals, and judges.

The Court cannot properly function and provide access to justice without accurate case files and timely distribution of filings. All of our Common Pleas Judges within the 39<sup>th</sup> Judicial District have experienced difficulty in timely addressing motions, judgments, and appeals as a result of incomplete dockets and lack of timely transmission of documents from the filing office to the Court. The failure to timely distribute court records has resulted in the rescheduling of hearings and other proceedings, which result in significant costs to the Court, litigants, attorneys,

and Fulton County. At worst, these shortcomings may result in the loss of rights to litigants in Fulton County. At a minimum, these operating deficiencies do not foster confidence in our Court system for our citizens, counsel of record, litigants, and other interested parties.

For the foregoing reasons, the President Judge hereby exercises their authority under 42 Pa. C.S.A. §§ 323, 325(1), and **ORDERS** the following upon the Filing Offices of the Fulton County Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills, and Clerk of the Orphans' Court:

1. Hours of Operation: The Filing Offices of the Fulton County Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills, and Clerk of the Orphans' Court shall be open to the public and the Court for the receipt and filing of records, documents, etc., excluding annually approved holidays, judicially declared emergencies, or such other specially approved closures by the Court, from the hours of 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
2. Filing:
  - a. Time-Stamping of Filings: Generally, all Documents (pleadings, orders, or any other documents required to be filed of record by rule or statute) received by a Fulton County Filing Office shall be **time-stamped and filed** on the **same business day they are received**, or the next business day if received when the filing office is closed. (The Filing Office should collect the required filing fees prior to accepting a filing, unless the fees are waived by statute, rule, or order of court.)
  - b. Proof of Filing – In-person Delivery: Specifically, all Documents received by a Fulton County Filing Office through **physical** delivery by an attorney, an attorney's staff, an agent, or a self-represented litigant shall be **immediately time-stamped and filed** in accordance with paragraph (2.a). In the presence of the person submitting the Document(s), proof of time stamping and filing shall be **immediately supplied in-person** to an attorney, an attorney's staff, an agent, or a self-represented litigant by providing a true and attested copy of the Document to the person when requested. Waiver of this requirement by the filing party shall be obtained in writing and maintained by the filing office. The Waiver Form is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

- c. Proof of Filing – Mail Delivery: All Documents received by a Fulton County Filing Office through **mail** delivery shall be time-stamped and filed in accordance with paragraph (2.a). Proof of time stamping and filing shall be **mailed not later than the next business day** to attorneys, staff and/or litigants by providing a true and attested copy of the document/filing to the filing party when requested and in accordance with the applicable rule(s) of procedure for the particular filing type.
3. Distribution of Court Notices, Orders, and/or other Court Initiated Filings: All Court orders, notices, opinions, adjudications, or other Court initiated filings must be time stamped and filed in accordance with paragraph (2.b) and in accordance with the applicable rules of procedure for the particular filing type. The Filing Office shall keep a log of all Court filings for each Common Pleas Judge, and shall issue a daily report to each Judge’s Chambers and Court Administration (via email or shared electronic document) containing the Filing Description, Time and Date Received, Date Timestamped, and Distribution for each Court filing **filed the prior business day**. The Daily Filings Log is attached hereto as Exhibit B. The Fulton County Filing Office shall effect service of the Court filing in accordance with the applicable rule(s) of procedure for the particular filing type, which may include serving copies by physically placing the item in courthouse mailboxes or bins, emailing copies to the attorney or litigant where a prior, proper request has been made, or by mailing the item using the United States Postal Service. Service by the particular Fulton County Filing Office of all Court filings shall occur **the same business day** the filing office receives and timestamps the Court filing.
4. Docket Notation: The Filing Offices of Fulton County shall properly notate the applicable docket in accordance with the rule(s) of procedure pertaining to the filing type, and the Filing Office must notate the appropriate docket by the **close of business the same day** proof of filing is completed. See, e.g., Pa. R.C.P. 236(b), Pa. R.Crim.P. 113, Pa. R.Crim.P. 114, Pa. R.O.C.P. 4.6(b).
5. Case Files: Any new Document(s) filed shall be added to the physical case file by the **close of the next business day** after the Document(s) is filed subject to the following exceptions:

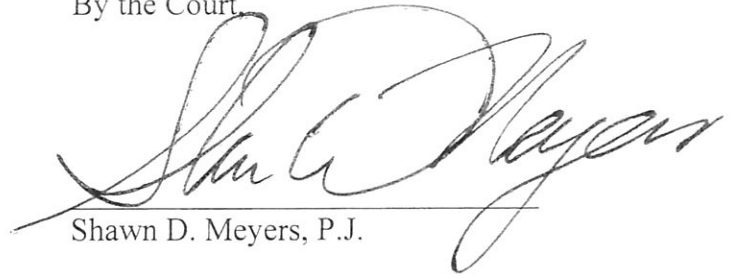
- a. If the Filing Office does not have possession of the case file, the Filing Office shall **within one-half hour** of the filing of the Document email the case file holder and Court Administration staff alerting the holder and Court Administration to the filing of a new Document and arrange delivery of the document or a copy thereof to the file holder.
  - b. The Filing Office must consult the Court's calendar to determine whether or not the Document filed is part of a file for which a hearing is scheduled in the next 5 business days. If so, the new Document shall be placed in the case file the **same business day** it is filed. If a Court proceeding is **not** occurring within the next 5 business days, the new Document shall be placed in the case file by the **close of business the next business day** after the Document is filed.
6. Court Action: The Filing Office shall review each Document filed to determine if the Court needs to act on the filed Document. The Filing Office may consult the spreadsheet titled "Fulton filing offices court desired actions for filings updated 11 25" for examples of types of filings and the Filing Offices' required action for the filing type. Once the Filing Office determines the Document requires Court action, they shall take steps necessary to transmit the Document to the appropriate judge's chambers (whether via **email where emergent** or by the **next physical transport time** when time is not of the essence). If Filing Office staff cannot distinguish whether or not a Document requires emergent action by the Court or may be delivered via the next physical transport time after consulting the "Fulton" spreadsheet, they shall call the assigned Judges' chambers or Court Administration for further guidance.
7. Appeals:
  - a. Notices of Appeal: All Fulton County Filing Offices shall comply with the Pennsylvania Rules of Appellate Procedure once they are in receipt of a parties' Notice of Appeal. Specifically, the Filing Office shall immediately timestamp the Notice of Appeal with the date of receipt the same business day it is received, and the Filing Office shall notate the docket with this receipt date. If a Notice of Appeal is received when a Filing Office is closed, the

Notice of Appeal shall be processed accordingly the **next business day**. The Filing Office shall transmit the Notice of Appeal to the appropriate appellate court and send a copy of the Notice of Appeal, any documentary or other attachments, as well as a receipt showing the collection of any fee, not later than the **next business day after the receipt date**. See Pa. R.A.P. 905(a)(3), (b). The Filing Office must consult and follow the spreadsheet titled “Fulton filing offices court desired actions for filings updated 11 25” for the Filing Offices’ required action for Notices of Appeal.

b. Trial Court Record Compilation and Transmittal to Appellate Court: The Fulton County Filing Offices must ensure the case file is complete, namely that all records are appropriately assembled in chronological order, and timely transmitted to the appropriate appellate court. See, e.g., Pa. R.A.P. 1931(a), (c), and (d). Any inquiries regarding appropriate handling of case file documents shall be addressed initially by the Filing Office’s Solicitor. To the extent the initial inquiries remain, the Filing Office may make an inquiry to the Court.

8. Docketing and Publication of this Administrative Order: Upon receipt of this Administrative Order, it shall be docketed in each docket of the Office of Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, and Clerk of Orphans’ Court, Register of Wills and Recorder of Deeds. A copy of this Administrative Order shall be posted for public view by the public, litigants, and attorneys in the Fulton Filing Office. Ms. Sherman is further ordered to provide a copy of this Administrative Order to all Fulton County Filing Offices’ staff and any and all future staff.
9. Enforcement of this Administrative Order: Any unapproved deviations from the procedures and directives outlined in this Administrative Order may lead to contempt proceedings being instituted pursuant to 42 Pa. C.S.A. § 4101, *et seq.*, before the undersigned.

By the Court



Shawn D. Meyers, P.J.

*Distribution:*

Common Pleas Judges of the 39<sup>th</sup> Judicial District  
Fulton County Commissioners  
Fulton County District Attorney  
Fulton County Public Defender  
Fulton County Sheriff  
Fulton County Probation/Parole  
Fulton County Domestic Relations  
Court Administrator of the 39<sup>th</sup> Judicial District  
Fulton County Bar Association  
Franklin County Bar Association



