

NOTICE TO THE BAR

MORRIS/SUSSEX VICINAGE PILOT PROGRAM TO SCHEDULE 4-DAY-A-WEEK CRIMINAL TRIALS

The Morris/Sussex Vicinage has commenced a pilot program to assess the efficiencies of scheduling criminal trials for four days a week, instead of three days a week. The goals of the pilot program include assessment of whether 4-day-a-week criminal trials result in better continuity for juries, a shorter time frame of juror service and a quicker resolution of trials, among other goals.

The pilot program began on September 1, 2018. All criminal trials are scheduled Monday through Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The first two hours of each trial day (8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.) are for calendar calls, pleas and motions, among other matters, as well as to address issues that may have arisen during the trial.

In Morris, calendar calls will be heard on Mondays from 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m. In Sussex, Monday calendar calls will be reserved for public defender cases only; Tuesday calendar calls will be reserved for private counsel cases only; and Friday afternoon calendar calls will be reserved for matters involving defendants held in custody outside of Sussex County.

Calendar matters that cannot be addressed prior to 10:30 a.m. will be referred to another judge for disposition that same day or can be re-scheduled as agreed upon by counsel and the court. Attorneys are advised to notify the court in advance if they anticipate an event requiring a significant amount of time. In such circumstance, the court may schedule the matter at a specific date and time.

If there are no matters scheduled between 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on a given day, a trial may proceed earlier on that day in the discretion of the court. The court will inform counsel of any change in the starting time of trials as soon as possible.

Attorneys are expected to be on time and ready to proceed in all matters as scheduled. The courts will be ready to proceed on matters at 8:30 a.m.

As noted, this is a pilot program and may be adjusted over the coming weeks and months to improve the process.

Stuart A. Minkowitz, Assignment Judge
Morris/Sussex Vicinage

Dated: October 15, 2018