

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA**

PUBLIC NOTICE

**ORDER CONCERNING EXCEPTION TO STANDING ORDER 20-7 AND
BANKRUPTCY COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES
CREATED BY THE OUTBREAK OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)
FOR THE RICHMOND DIVISION ONLY**

The Richmond Division General Order No. 20-1, which was entered on March 13, 2020, and which was amended on March 17, 2020, both implemented the Protocol in Response to Public Health Emergency (the “Protocol”). The Protocol, by its terms, is subject to further amendment.

The attached Richmond General Order 20-2, entered on March 20, 2020, as provided for in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Virginia Standing Order No. 20-7, at paragraph 4 of that standing order, permits the “presiding judge in a particular case to order otherwise,” as described further in Richmond General Order 20-2.

Richmond General Order No. 20-2 promulgates procedures and other requirements and considerations specific to the Richmond Division as of the effective date and duration set forth therein. Appended to Richmond General Order No. 20-2 are: (1) a clean version of the Protocol in Response to Public Health Emergency—Effective March 23, 2020, through April 30, 2020, including Exhibit A, Emergency Contact Information, thereto; and (2) an accompanying Exhibit 1, Blackline of Protocol.

William C. Redden
Clerk of Court

Date: March 20, 2020

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Richmond Division**

In re:

**Exception to Standing Order 20-7 and
Bankruptcy Court Operations Under the
Exigent Circumstances Created by the
Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019
(COVID-19) for the Richmond Division
Only**

Richmond General Order 20-2

**ORDER CONCERNING EXCEPTION TO STANDING ORDER 20-7 AND
BANKRUPTCY COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES
CREATED BY THE OUTBREAK OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)
FOR THE RICHMOND DIVISION ONLY**

Richmond Division General Order 20-1 was entered on March 13, 2020, implementing the Protocol in Response to Public Health Emergency (the “Protocol”) on an interim emergency basis, as amended on March 17, 2020. The Protocol provides that it may be amended by further Standing Order.

On March 18, 2020, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Virginia entered an Order Temporarily Extending All Deadlines in Bankruptcy Cases (“Standing Order 20-7”). Pursuant to paragraph 4 of Standing Order 20-7, “[t]he provisions of this Order shall control with respect to all cases currently pending and cases to be filed in this Court, unless the presiding judge in a particular case otherwise orders.” In light of the foregoing, it is

ORDERED that Standing Order 20-7 shall not apply to cases currently pending and cases to be filed in the Richmond Division Only; and it is further

ORDERED that the amendments to the Protocol, as reflected on the following, are hereby **ADOPTED** on an interim emergency basis effective March 23, 2020, through and including April 30, 2020; and it is further

ORDERED that for matters and cases not previously excepted from the provisions of Standing Order 20-7, any deadline that fell during the period beginning on March 18, 2020, and ending on March 23, 2020, is hereby **EXTENDED THROUGH AND INCLUDING MARCH 23, 2020**. This extension shall not apply to matters and cases previously excepted by Court Order from the provisions of Standing Order 20-7. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing herein shall prejudice the rights of any party to seek an extension of time or to request other relief; and it is further

ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall post this Standing Order on the Court's website and distribute a copy to all registered CM/ECF users by email.

ENTERED: March 20, 2020

/s/ Kevin R. Huennekens
KEVIN R. HUENNEKENS
United States Bankruptcy Judge

/s/ Keith L. Phillips
KEITH L. PHILLIPS
United States Bankruptcy Judge

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Richmond Division**

PROTOCOL IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Effective March 23, 2020, through April 30, 2020

This protocol (the “Protocol”) applies in all bankruptcy cases and proceedings during the period of March 23, 2020, through April 30, 2020, (the “Protocol Period”) pending in the Richmond Division. During the Protocol Period, to the extent of any inconsistency between this Protocol, the Local Bankruptcy Rules, and any applicable scheduling order, this Protocol shall govern. Except as modified herein, applicable bankruptcy and non-bankruptcy law, including but not limited to Title 11 of the United States Code, the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure, and the Local Bankruptcy Rules, shall remain in full force and effect. While this Protocol is intended to minimize the number of hearings held and in-person attendance at any required hearings, the due process rights and appellate rights of all parties-in-interest must be protected.

1. **Obligations of Parties and Counsel.** Parties and counsel are responsible for becoming familiar with this Protocol and monitoring the Court’s website and the dockets of their cases. Counsel must make reasonable efforts to communicate with clients prior to any scheduled hearing and must specifically advise the client not to attend said hearing.
2. **Continuance of Hearings by the Court.** Hearings may be scheduled or rescheduled by the Court in its discretion, in which case parties shall be notified by the Clerk by such method as is reasonable under the circumstances.
3. **Continuance of Hearings by the Parties.** All matters, including final evidentiary hearings and trials, may be continued for cause upon consent motion and order. Cause will be construed liberally. Routine matters set on Wednesdays (for Judge Phillips, before 9:30AM and for Judge Huennekens, before 11:30AM) may be continued by agreement of the parties by telephone call to the courtroom deputies.
4. **Modified Procedures for Specific Types of Motions Pending During the Protocol Period.** Unless a hearing is specifically requested or an objection is timely filed, during the Protocol Period, the Court will not conduct hearings on the following matters, but, instead, will rule on the pleadings after expiration of any requisite notice period in accordance with Local Bankruptcy Rule 9013-1(L):
 - a. **Reaffirmation Agreements:** The Court will not conduct hearings on reaffirmation agreements that would impose an undue hardship on the debtors or their dependents. If no response is filed by the counterparty to the agreement within fourteen (14) days of the date of filing of the reaffirmation agreements and if the debtor(s) file a certification that they have complied with 11 U.S.C. §§ 521(a)(6) and 362(h) and request entry of a *Husain* order, the Court will issue orders not approving such agreements, but finding that the debtors have complied with 11 U.S.C. §§ 521(a)(6) and 362(h). See *In re Husain*, 364 B.R. 211 (Bankr.

E.D. Va. 2007); *In re Isom*, Case No. 07-31469, 2007 WL 2110318 (Bankr. E.D. Va. July 27, 2007).

- b. ***Motions to Extend the Automatic Stay Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 362(c)(3) and Impose the Automatic Stay Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 362(c)(4):*** During the Protocol Period, contemporaneously with any motion to extend or impose the automatic stay, the debtor(s) must file an affidavit(s) substantiating such motion. Upon expiration of the notice period, if no objections are timely filed and the debtor(s) has timely filed an affidavit(s), the debtor(s) may submit a proposed order granting a motion to extend the automatic stay or motion to impose stay. The order may provide that the stay is extended nunc pro tunc to the date the notice period expired. If no affidavit is timely submitted, the debtor(s) may submit a bridge order extending or imposing the stay pending a subsequent hearing.
- c. ***Motions to Approve Loan Modification:*** Upon expiration of the negative notice period, the Court will issue an order conditionally approving a loan modification agreement and scheduling a final hearing. In order for a loan modification to be approved on a final basis, the movant must submit a fully executed copy of the underlying loan agreement(s) and a proposed order.
- d. ***Applications to Approve Compensation:*** Upon expiration of the negative notice period, the movant may submit proposed orders approving applications to approve compensation. In Chapter 13 cases, such orders must be endorsed by the Chapter 13 trustee. For all other chapters, the proposed order must be endorsed by the United States trustee.
- e. ***Motions to Continue/Extend Deadlines:*** For motions to continue or extend any deadlines to which all necessary parties have consented, no negative notice period is required and the parties may submit a consent order contemporaneously with the filing of the consent motion. For any other motion to continue or extend deadlines, unless expedited relief is requested, the movant must provide three (3) days' negative notice. Upon expiration of the notice period, the movant may submit an order granting the motion.
- f. ***Pre-trial Conferences:*** If all necessary parties are in agreement, in advance of any scheduled pre-trial conference, parties may contact the appropriate courtroom deputy to schedule a trial date. If the parties can select a mutually agreeable trial date and there is no other need to hold a pre-trial conference, the Court may enter a pre-trial order without convening the pre-trial conference.
- g. ***Motions for Relief from the Automatic Stay and Relief from the Co-Debtor Stay Subject to Standing Order 10-2:*** Upon expiration of the requisite negative notice period, in the absence of any response, the movant may submit proposed orders in compliance with Form B of Standing Order 10-2. Notwithstanding the foregoing,

in Chapter 7 cases, if the Chapter 7 trustee has not abandoned the subject real or personal property, the proposed order must be endorsed by the Chapter 7 trustee.

5. **Remote Hearings.** Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, all hearings during the Protocol Period must be conducted remotely by teleconference using CourtSolutions. Instructions for telephonic appearances in Richmond are available [here](#).
6. **Hearings Non-Evidentiary.** All counsel are encouraged to make liberal use of the Court's negative notice procedures. All self-scheduled hearings during the Protocol Period shall be treated as non-evidentiary hearings. To schedule an evidentiary hearing, the parties must contact the hearing judge's courtroom deputy.
7. **Evidence.** Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, any hearing requiring witness testimony shall be continued. The parties must contact the hearing judge's courtroom deputy to reschedule such hearings. Parties are strongly encouraged to submit stipulations of fact in advance of any hearing, which stipulations should be electronically filed on CM/ECF. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Local Bankruptcy Rules or scheduling order, documentary evidence must be filed electronically on CM/ECF no later than 24 hours in advance of the hearing/trial. Counsel should contact the Clerk's Office for instructions on how to provide any documentary evidence that is not in a suitable format to be filed electronically on CM/ECF.
8. **Hearing Judge.** During the Protocol Period, hearings may be held by the judge assigned to the case, or by any other bankruptcy judge.
9. **Requests for Expedited Hearings and/or to Shorten Time.** Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, all requests for expedited hearings and/or to shorten time must be made in accordance with the Local Bankruptcy Rules. In addition, counsel must send an email to the appropriate emergency contact, as detailed on [Exhibit A](#) hereto.
10. **Time Sensitive Orders or Other Court Action.** Any time-sensitive request not otherwise provided by paragraph 9 hereof should be directed to the appropriate emergency contact, as detailed on [Exhibit A](#) hereto.
11. **Deadlines.** Unless otherwise modified by order of the Court, all deadlines remain in full force in effect. The Court will consider any timely request to modify/toll deadlines, which should be made by appropriate motion and order. For avoidance of doubt, for matters and cases not previously excepted from the provisions of Standing Order 20-7, any deadline that fell during the period beginning on March 18, 2020, and ending on March 23, 2020, is hereby **EXTENDED THROUGH AND INCLUDING MARCH 23, 2020**. This extension shall not apply to matters and cases previously excepted by Court Order from the provisions of Standing Order 20-7. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing herein shall prejudice the rights of any party to seek an extension of time or to request other relief.

12. This Protocol may be amended by further Standing Order, which shall be published on the Court's website and distributed by email to all CM/ECF users. Each Judge may vary this Protocol on a case-by-case basis in his or her discretion.

EXHIBIT A
EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Hon. Kevin R. Huennekens	EDVABK-Emergency-Judge_Huennekens@vaeb.uscourts.gov
Hon. Keith L. Phillips	EDVABK-Emergency-Judge_Phillips@vaeb.uscourts.gov

EXHIBIT 1
BLACKLINE OF PROTOCOL

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Richmond Division**

PROTOCOL IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Effective March ~~16~~23, 2020, through April 30, 2020

This protocol (the “Protocol”) applies in all bankruptcy cases and proceedings during the period of March ~~16~~23, 2020, through April 30, 2020, (the “Protocol Period”) pending in the Richmond Division. During the Protocol Period, to the extent of any inconsistency between this Protocol, the ~~local bankruptcy rules~~ Local Bankruptcy Rules, and any applicable scheduling order, this Protocol shall govern. Except as modified herein, applicable bankruptcy and non-bankruptcy law, including but not limited to Title 11 of the United States Code, the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure, and the Local Bankruptcy Rules, shall remain in full force and effect. While this Protocol is intended to minimize the number of hearings held and in-person attendance at any required hearings, the due process rights and appellate rights of all parties-in-interest must be protected.

1. **Obligations of Parties and Counsel.** Parties and counsel are responsible for becoming familiar with this Protocol and monitoring the Court’s website and the dockets of their cases. Counsel must make reasonable efforts to communicate with clients prior to any scheduled hearing and must specifically advise the client ~~whether, in light of this Protocol, the client must not~~ to attend said hearing.
2. **Continuance of Hearings by the Court.** Hearings may be scheduled or rescheduled by the Court ~~to be heard during the Protocol Period. The Clerk shall provide notice of any such hearings scheduled or rescheduled by the Court in its discretion, in which case parties shall be notified by the Clerk by such method as is reasonable under the circumstances.~~
3. **Continuance of Hearings by the Parties.** All matters, including final evidentiary hearings and trials, may be continued for cause upon consent motion and order. Cause will be construed liberally ~~and will include both health-related reasons and travel difficulties.~~ Routine matters set on Wednesdays (for Judge Phillips, before 9:30AM and for Judge Huennekens, before 11:30AM) may be continued by agreement of the parties by telephone call to the courtroom deputies.
4. **Modified Procedures for Specific Types of Motions Pending During the Protocol Period.** Unless a hearing is specifically requested or an objection is timely filed, during the Protocol Period, the Court will not conduct hearings on the following matters, but, instead, will rule on the pleadings after expiration of any requisite notice period: in accordance with Local Bankruptcy Rule 9013-1(L):
 - a. **Reaffirmation Agreements:** The Court will not conduct hearings on reaffirmation agreements ~~in which the debtor(s) is represented by counsel but counsel could not certify that it~~ that would ~~not~~ impose an undue hardship. ~~In such~~

~~cases, unless a~~ on the debtors or their dependents. If no response is filed by the counterparty to the agreement within fourteen (14) days of the date of filing of the reaffirmation agreements, ~~the Court may and if the debtor(s) file a certification that they have complied with 11 U.S.C. §§ 521(a)(6) and 362(h) and request entry of a Husain order, the Court will~~ issue orders not approving such agreements, but finding that the debtors have complied with 11 U.S.C. §§ 521(a)(6) and 362(h). See *In re Husain*, 364 B.R. 211 (Bankr. E.D. Va. 2007); *In re Isom*, Case No. 07-31469, 2007 WL 2110318 (Bankr. E.D. Va. July 27, 2007). ~~The Court will continue with its pre-Protocol Period procedures as to any other types of reaffirmation agreement.~~

- b. ***Motions to Extend the Automatic Stay Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 362(c)(3) and Impose the Automatic Stay Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 362(c)(4):*** During the Protocol Period, contemporaneously with any motion to extend or impose the automatic stay, the debtor(s) must file an affidavit(s) substantiating such motion. Upon expiration of the notice period, if no objections are timely filed and the debtor(s) has timely filed an affidavit ~~in support of the motion(s),~~ the debtor(s) may submit a proposed order granting a motion to extend the automatic stay ~~or motion to impose stay.~~ The order may provide that the stay is extended nunc pro tunc to the date the notice period expired. If no affidavit is timely submitted, the debtor(s) may submit a hearing will be required. ~~This procedure does not apply to motions to impose the automatic stay pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 362(c)(4). For either motions to extend the automatic stay or to impose the automatic stay, if a hearing is required, counsel for debtors are encouraged to proceed upon affidavit. Where testimony is required, the Court will liberally entertain requests for bridge orders order extending or imposing the stay pending a subsequent evidentiary hearing.~~
- c. ***Motions to Approve Loan Modification:*** Upon expiration of the negative notice period, ~~movants may submit proposed orders granting motions to approve loan modifications~~ the Court will issue an order conditionally approving a loan modification agreement and scheduling a final hearing. In order for a loan modification to be approved on a final basis, the movant must submit a fully executed copy of the underlying loan agreement(s). ~~If the movant does not have a fully executed copy of the underlying loan agreement(s), the movant may request an order conditionally approving the loan agreement, but not scheduling a final hearing) and a proposed order.~~
- d. ***Applications to Approve Compensation:*** Upon expiration of the negative notice period, the movant may submit proposed orders approving applications to approve compensation. In Chapter 13 cases, such orders must be endorsed by the Chapter 13 trustee. For all other chapters, the proposed order must be endorsed by the United States trustee.
- e. ***Motions to Continue/Extend Deadlines:*** For motions to continue or extend any deadlines ~~consented to by which~~ all necessary parties have consented, no negative

notice period is required and the parties may submit a consent order contemporaneously with the filing of the consent motion. For any other motion to continue or extend deadlines, unless expedited relief is requested, the movant must provide ~~seven~~ (7) three (3) days' negative notice. Upon expiration of the notice period, the movant may submit an order granting the motion.

- f. **Pre-trial Conferences:** If all necessary parties are in agreement, in advance of any scheduled pre-trial conference, parties may contact the appropriate courtroom deputy to schedule a trial date. If the parties can select a mutually agreeable trial date and there is no other need to hold a pre-trial conference, the ~~court~~Court may enter a pre-trial order without convening the pre-trial conference.
 - g. **Motions for Relief from the Automatic Stay and Relief from the Co-Debtor Stay Subject to Standing Order 10-2:** Upon expiration of the requisite negative notice period, in the absence of any response, the movant may submit proposed orders in compliance with Form B of Standing Order 10-2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in Chapter 7 cases, if the Chapter 7 trustee has not abandoned the subject real or personal property, the proposed order must be endorsed by the Chapter 7 trustee.
5. **Remote Hearings.** Unless otherwise ordered by the ~~court~~Court, all ~~non-evidentiary~~ hearings during the Protocol Period ~~may~~must be conducted remotely by teleconference using CourtSolutions. ~~All parties~~Instructions for telephonic appearances in Richmond are encouraged to make liberal use of this policy available here.
 6. **Hearings Non-Evidentiary.** All counsel are encouraged to make liberal use of the Court's negative notice procedures. All self-scheduled hearings during the Protocol Period shall be treated as non-evidentiary hearings. To schedule an evidentiary hearing, the parties must contact the hearing judge's courtroom deputy.
 7. **Evidence.** ~~Parties are encouraged to limit the number of persons attending a hearing. always~~Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, any hearing requiring witness testimony shall be continued. The parties must contact the hearing judge's courtroom deputy to reschedule such hearings. Parties are strongly encouraged to submit stipulations of fact in advance of any hearing, which stipulations should be electronically filed on CM/ECF.
 - a. **Documentary Evidence:** ~~Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the local bankruptcy rules~~Local Bankruptcy Rules or scheduling order, documentary evidence must be filed electronically on CM/ECF no later than 24 hours in advance of the hearing/trial. Counsel should contact the Clerk's Office for instructions on how to provide any documentary evidence that is not in a suitable format to be filed electronically on CM/ECF.
 - b. **Witness Testimony:** ~~Parties are further encouraged to use deposition testimony and affidavits where appropriate. Where the parties cannot proceed on the deposition transcript or affidavit, witnesses may participate remotely at the discretion and pursuant to the direction of the hearing judge.~~

8. **Hearing Judge.** During the Protocol Period, hearings may be held by the judge assigned to the case, or by any other bankruptcy judge.
9. **~~Request~~Requests for Expedited Hearings.—During and/or to Shorten Time.** Notwithstanding anything to the ~~Protocol Period~~, contrary herein, all requests for expedited hearings and/or to shorten time must be ~~requested~~made in accordance with the ~~local rules~~Local Bankruptcy Rules. In addition, counsel must send an email to the appropriate emergency contact, as detailed on Exhibit A hereto.
10. **Time Sensitive Orders or Other Court Action.** Any time-sensitive request not otherwise provided by paragraph 9 hereof should be directed to the appropriate emergency contact, as detailed on Exhibit A hereto.
11. **Deadlines.** Unless otherwise modified by order of the Court, all deadlines remain in full force in effect. The Court will consider any timely request to modify/toll deadlines, which should be made by appropriate motion and order. For avoidance of doubt, for matters and cases not previously excepted from the provisions of Standing Order 20-7, any deadline that fell during the period beginning on March 18, 2020, and ending on March 23, 2020, is hereby EXTENDED THROUGH AND INCLUDING MARCH 23, 2020. This extension shall not apply to matters and cases previously excepted by Court Order from the provisions of Standing Order 20-7. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing herein shall prejudice the rights of any party to seek an extension of time or to request other relief.
12. This Protocol may be amended by further Standing Order, which shall be published on the Court's website and distributed by email to all CM/ECF users. Each Judge may vary this Protocol on a case-by-case basis in his or her discretion.

EXHIBIT A
EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Hon. Kevin R. Huennekens	EDVABK-Emergency-Judge_Huennekens@vaeb.uscourts.gov
Hon. Keith L. Phillips	EDVABK-Emergency-Judge_Phillips@vaeb.uscourts.gov