

**SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA  
JUVENILE COURT PROCEDURAL RULES COMMITTEE**

**ADOPTION REPORT**

**Amendment of Pa.R.J.C.P. 140 and 141**

On April 25, 2025, the Supreme Court amended Pennsylvania Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure 140 and 141 to permit a court to direct a juvenile's place of detention at the time of apprehension pursuant to a bench warrant. The Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee has prepared this Adoption Report describing the rulemaking process. An Adoption Report should not be confused with Comments to the rules. See Pa.R.J.A. 103, cmt. The statements contained herein are those of the Committee, not the Court.

If a juvenile, with sufficient notice, fails to appear at a hearing, or a juvenile absconds, the court may issue a bench warrant for the juvenile. See Pa.R.J.C.P. 140, 141. When a juvenile is apprehended and the juvenile is to be detained, the rules require the juvenile to be taken to a facility designated in the bench warrant.

The statewide Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) requires a court user to input specific information to generate a bench warrant. Because CPCMS is programmed to adhere to the requirements of the rules, the user must enter information directing where to detain an apprehended juvenile, *i.e.*, a "place of detention," before the bench warrant can be generated and issued. See Pa.R.J.C.P. 140(C)(1)(c), 141(C).

The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) maintains CPMCS, receives feedback and requests from its users, and, in consultation with the Committee, AOPC designs and publishes forms necessary to implement the rules. See Pa.R.J.C.P. 165. Relevant to the instant proposal, AOPC received a request to revise the CPCMS-generated bench warrant to permit the court, at the time of apprehension, to direct where to detain a juvenile. The rationale for the request was that the court could not predict, at the time of issuing a bench warrant, the availability of a detention center at the time of apprehension given that availability can vary over time. Believing that statewide changes to the content of bench warrants were constrained by the rules, the matter was brought before the Committee.

The Committee proposed responsive rule amendments intended to change the process after a juvenile is to be detained after apprehension on a bench warrant. Instead of the bench warrant directing where to take the juvenile, the amendment would provide the option of the court directing where to take the juvenile at the time of apprehension. With this option, and as discussed in the commentary, the court user may insert contact information, *e.g.*, juvenile probation office telephone number, to be used by law enforcement once the juvenile has been apprehended. Corollary amendments to the rule

governing bench warrants for the failure to appear in dependency proceedings were not included because a child would be placed in shelter care and not a detention center. See Pa.R.J.C.P. 1140, cmt. at ¶ 4.

Additionally, the Committee proposed amending Pa.R.J.C.P. 140 and 141 stylistically. An apprehended juvenile or witness will no longer be “brought” before a judge; rather, they would “appear.” Some of the commentary restating the rule text has been removed. In Pa.R.J.C.P. 141, the third paragraph of the Comment was removed and subdivision (c) was amended to include language governing out-of-county apprehension.

The Committee published the proposal for comment. See 54 Pa.B. 5082 (August 10, 2024). No comments were received. Post-publication, the Committee revised “probation” to “juvenile probation office” in the fifth paragraph of the Comment to Pa.R.J.C.P. 140 and added the operative commentary proposed in Pa.R.J.C.P. 140 to Pa.R.J.C.P. 141.

Aside from stylistic revisions, the following commentary has been removed:

#### **Pa.R.J.C.P. 140**

Under Rule 800, 42 Pa.C.S. § 6335(c) was suspended only to the extent that it is inconsistent with this rule. Under paragraph (A)(1), the judge is to find a subpoenaed or summoned person failed to appear and sufficient notice was given to issue a bench warrant. The fact that the juvenile or witness may abscond or may not attend or be brought to a hearing is not sufficient evidence for a bench warrant.

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This distinction is made to differentiate between children who are alleged delinquents and children who are witnesses. See paragraph (C) for alleged delinquents and paragraph (D) for witnesses. See *also* Rule 120 for definition of “juvenile” and “minor.”

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Pursuant to paragraph (F)(2), the bench warrant is to be returned to the judge who issued the warrant or to the judge or juvenile court hearing officer designated by the President Judge to hear warrants by the arresting officer executing a return of warrant. See paragraph (F)(3).

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Pursuant to paragraph (F)(5), once the warrant is vacated, the juvenile probation officer, other court designee, or law enforcement officer is to remove the warrant from all appropriate registries so ...

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Official Note: Rule 140 adopted February 26, 2008, effective June 1, 2008. Amended September 30, 2009, effective January 1, 2010. Amended April 21, 2011, effective July 1, 2011. Amended September 20, 2011, effective November 1, 2011. Amended April 6, 2017, effective September 1, 2017. Amended May 4, 2018, effective July 1, 2018.

*Committee Explanatory Reports:* Final Report explaining the provisions of Rule 140 published with the Court's Order at 38 Pa.B. 1142 (March 8, 2008). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 140 with the Court's Order at 39 Pa.B. 6029 (October 17, 2009). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 140 published with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 2319 (May 7, 2011). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 140 with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 5355 (October 8, 2011). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 140 published with the Court's Order at 47 Pa.B. 2313 (April 22, 2017). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 140 published with the Court's Order at 48 Pa.B. 2939 (May 19, 2018).

#### **Pa.R.J.C.P. 141**

Pursuant to paragraph (C), the juvenile is to be detained in a detention facility or any other facility designated in the bench warrant. If a juvenile is taken into custody pursuant to the bench warrant in a county other than the county of issuance, the juvenile is to be transported back to the county of issuance prior to the seventy-two-hour detention hearing mandated pursuant to paragraph (D)(1).

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The arresting officer is to notify the juvenile's guardian of the arrest, the reasons for the arrest, and the juvenile's whereabouts under paragraph (F).

Pursuant to paragraph (G)(2), the bench warrant is to be returned to the judge who issued the warrant or to the judge designated by the President Judge to hear warrants by the arresting officer executing a return of warrant. See paragraph (G)(3).

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Pursuant to paragraph (G)(4), the bench warrant is to be vacated after the return of the warrant is executed.

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Pursuant to paragraph (G)(5), once the warrant is vacated, the juvenile probation officer or other court designee is to remove the warrant or request that a law enforcement officer remove the warrant from all appropriate registries so ...

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Official Note: Rule 141 adopted September 30, 2009, effective January 1, 2010. Amended April 21, 2011, effective July 1, 2011.

*Committee Explanatory Reports:* Final Report explaining the provisions of Rule 141 published with the Court's Order at 39 Pa.B. 6029 (October 17, 2009). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 141 published with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 2319 (May 7, 2011).

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The amendments become effective October 1, 2025.