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IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF CLARK AND THE CITIES OF VANCOUVER,
WASHOUGAL AND CAMAS

In Re:

COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE
EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED
BY COVID-19 AND RELATED
CORONOVIRUS

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER - AMENDED
NO. GAO 2020-10

WHEREAS:

1) Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington State Supreme Court has adopted Second Revised and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations, No. 25700-B-626 granting emergency authority to this court to adopt, modify, and/or suspend court rules and orders, and to take further actions concerning court operations, as warranted to address the current state of emergency declared February 29, 2020 by Washington State Governor Jay Inslee and nationally by President Trump March 13, 2020, due to the public health emergency as a result of the outbreak of Coronavirus/COVID-19;

2) During this state of emergency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Washington State Department of Health have recommended increasingly

1 stringent social distancing measures of six feet between people, and have encouraged
2 vulnerable individuals to avoid public spaces;

3 3) Consistent with these recommendations Governor Inslee issued a "Stay Home,
4 Stay Healthy" order directing non-essential businesses to close, banned public
5 gatherings and required Washington citizens to stay home except for essential
6 activities; and
7

8 4) Clark County District Court serves both Clark County and the City of Vancouver
9 and is a shared courthouse with Clark County Superior Court. District Court frequently
10 serves close to 200 litigants per day who appear with family, friends, and attorneys on
11 one floor of the courthouse to attend motion hearings, protection order hearings,
12 arraignments, trials, infraction hearings, small claims trials, civil hearings, and probation
13 hearings. This list is only some, not all, of the matters heard each day and does not
14 include numbers for the people also appearing at the courthouse on Superior Court
15 matters. Given the number of identified and projected COVID-19 cases in Washington
16 State and the risk to public, court staff, witnesses, jurors and any other parties
17 scheduled to appear in court; and
18

19 5) That court operations are recognized as essential and may often be conducted
20 by alternative means with measures taken for public safety. The response from the
21 court to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 must be continued while allowing the
22 court to operate effectively;
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25 Therefore, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that effective Monday, March 16,
26 2020:

- 1) All infraction hearings currently scheduled that require an in person court appearance of any party will be rescheduled to a later date until all social distancing limitations are no longer recommended by order of Governor Inslee, recommendations of Centers for Disease Control and/or Washington State Department of Health. The court may in its discretion reschedule hearings virtually where available to the court and parties. Mail-in mitigation and contested hearings will still be heard as received;
- 2) All civil ex parte motions will continue to be processed electronically; civil motions may be noted and heard without oral argument virtually where possible (see policy below);
- 3) All newly filed Small Claims, Impounds, and Name Change Petitions have been scheduled out past May 31, 2020 and will be heard virtually where possible;
- 4) Pursuant to Supreme Court of Washington Order No. 25700-B-626, all Anti-Harassment and Stalking Protection Order hearings will be handled virtually where possible until further notice. The court may continue cases where in-person attendance is necessary based on recommended public health measures. Requirements for personal service of the petition or temporary order are suspended, except as to orders directing the surrender of firearms. Where personal service is not required, service may be made by law enforcement, including electronic service with acknowledgement of receipt, by process servers, by agreed service memorialized in writing, by publication or by mail. Motions to rescind or modify Criminal No-Contact Orders will be granted a hearing only upon judicial determination and will be scheduled virtually where possible.

- 1 5) Due to the Court's reduced ability to obtain an adequate number of jurors and
2 potential impact to the ability of attorneys and litigants to appear, the time period
3 of the continuances implemented by this Administrative Order and Supreme
4 Court Order 25700-B-626 will be excluded periods under CrRLJ 3.3 Time for
5 Trial Rule through September 1, 2020;
6
- 7 6) All criminal trials currently scheduled will be continued past September 1, 2020;
8 all civil trials currently scheduled will be continued past January 1, 2021;
- 9 7) Any out of custody criminal hearings cancelled since March 16, 2020 to include,
10 but not limited to, mandatory pre-trial, reviews, change of pleas, and trial settings
11 shall be rescheduled by summons to a later date; or scheduled by agreement of
12 the parties and assigned department;
- 13 8) Criminal out of custody arraignments cancelled since March 16, 2020 shall be
14 rescheduled by summons to a date after May 4, 2020; in custody arraignments
15 shall proceed as scheduled;
- 16 9) Review hearings set to determine compliance with any order issued to surrender
17 weapons, including both criminal and civil orders, will be scheduled per the usual
18 rules and practice of the court;
- 19 20
21 10) Virtual hearings: if there is a request for or requirement by the court for a litigant
22 to appear virtually, the party/defendant and/or attorney is responsible for
23 providing the court good working contact information. Time of hearing for virtual
24 hearings will be the time period starting at the scheduled time and continuing four
25 (4) hours past the scheduled time. The parties are expected to continue to make
26 themselves available until their case is called. Defendants who are required to
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1 appear virtually, but fail to pick up the phone or sign in virtually when their case is
2 called, shall be treated like any other failure to appear and a bench warrant may
3 issue after the court has made reasonable attempts at reaching the party;

4
5 11) All in-custody matters will be handled via video conferencing until further notice;

6 12) Pursuant to Supreme Court Order 25700-B-626 an electronic signature shall be
7 deemed a reliable means for authentication of documents and shall have the
8 same force and effect as an original signature to a paper copy of the document
9 signed. In-person signatures of parties are not required so long as orders for
10 future court dates, any conditions of release, protection order provisions and any
11 other order of the court are on the record with the parties present. For virtual
12 hearings, per General Rule 30(d)(2)(E)(ii) the court with permission of the
13 signatories can affix acknowledgement of signatures on the documents without
14 the parties being present.
15

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17 13) All persons present in any courtroom in District Court, in lobby areas or in any
18 other areas of the courthouse must observe social distancing and maintain a
19 distance of at least 6 feet from any other person. All orders and rules
20 promulgated by either Clark County District Court or Clark County Superior Court
21 shall be observed in the common areas of the Clark County Courthouse. The
22 court may make hearings accessible through live streaming or members of the
23 public may request recordings of court proceedings through District Court. If
24 alternatives to public access are available and the court makes the appropriate
25 findings under the law, the court may limit public not required to appear from
26 entering the courthouse or courtrooms until all social distancing limitations are no
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1 longer recommended by order of Governor Inslee, recommendations of Centers
2 for Disease Control and/or Washington State Department of Health. The court
3 will not exclude victims in criminal matters from appearing in the courtroom;
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5 14) No person exhibiting signs of COVID-19, including fever, persistent cough or
6 shortness of breath shall be present in any courtroom and may be excluded by
7 the presiding judicial officer.

8 For all hearings currently pending and for hearings or new cases filed during the
9 pendency of this order that are delayed pursuant to this order; such delay or
10 continuance shall constitute an excluded period pursuant to CrRLJ 3.3, CrRLJ 3.4,
11 CrRLJ 4.1, IRLJ 2.2, IRLJ 2.4, IRLJ 2.6 and any other applicable court rule.
12

13 This order may impact the following Clark County District Court Local Rules: LCRLJ
14 40; LSC 4; LCrRLJ 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.5; LIRLJ 2.4, 2.6.

15 The public is encouraged to continue utilizing Court services while following all
16 applicable public health guidelines.
17

18 All other previous Administrative Orders remain in full effect, except as modified
19 herein. All provisions of this order will remain in effect until further order of the Court.
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21 Dated this 2nd day of July, 2020.
22

23 
24 _____
25 KELLI E. OSLER
26 PRESIDING JUDGE
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