

## COVID-19 Court Closure - Criminal Emergency Protocols

April 9, 2020

Orange County Superior Court issued an emergency order closing the Court's facilities to the public, at least until April 24, 2020, in response to the health concerns raised by the COVID-19 pandemic. During closure, the Court has implemented COVID-19 Court Request processes for Settlement Conferences, Plea Agreements, Stipulated Continuances, Pretrial Own Recognizance (OR) Release Motions, and other emergency motions.



### Settlement Conferences

Attorneys may request settlement conferences for pretrial matters that are on calendar from now through April 24, 2020. To submit a request, complete a [COVID-19 Court Request Form](#) and email it to [FaxSettleConf@occourts.org](mailto:FaxSettleConf@occourts.org). The Settlement Judge will initiate the settlement conference call when the matter is ready to be heard.

### Plea Agreements

The Court will accept plea agreements for in custody misdemeanor cases, excluding DUI's, **and** in custody felony and misdemeanor probation violations. To submit a request, complete a [COVID-19 Court Request Form](#) and email it to [FaxPleaAgreements@occourts.org](mailto:FaxPleaAgreements@occourts.org). Requests must be received by **noon the day before the case will be heard**.

Court staff will monitor the email box, calendar the case in the appropriate department with staggered hearing times and email the attorney with confirmation that the case was added to the Court's calendar. Defendants will not be transported for these hearings; attorneys with 977 authority will be making appearances.

The Court has suspended the use of Tahl forms for in-custody misdemeanor cases. If there is a Protective Order

that needs to be served on a defendant, Court staff will forward the protective order to the Sheriff's Dept. Sheriff's personnel will serve the protective order on the defendant.

### Stipulated Continuances

Attorneys have been emailing court staff *Request for Continuance (L-1050)* forms. To streamline the process, and to ensure requests are processed as they are received, a new email box has been created for this purpose. Beginning April 7, 2020, attorneys may email *Request for Continuance (L-1050)* forms to the [FaxStipulations@occourts.org](mailto:FaxStipulations@occourts.org).

### Emergency Bail Schedule

On April 6, 2020, the Judicial Council adopted a Rule of Court Amendment that establishes a [Statewide Emergency Bail Schedule](#) to promulgate uniformity in the handling of certain offenses during the state of emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Orange County Superior Court adopted this Emergency Bail Schedule forthwith, see [Administrative Order 20/12](#) for details. The Emergency Bail Schedule will apply to every accused person arrested and in pretrial custody **and** to every accused person held in pretrial custody.

### Pretrial Own Recognizance (OR) Release Motions

Beginning on April 8, 2020, attorneys may submit Pretrial OR Release Motions by completing a [COVID-19 Court Request Form](#) and emailing it to the [FaxORrequests@occourts.org](mailto:FaxORrequests@occourts.org) and [COVID19OR@da.ocgov.com](mailto:COVID19OR@da.ocgov.com). Requests must be received by **noon the day before the case will be heard**.

Court staff will monitor the email box, calendar the case in the appropriate department with staggered hearing times and email the requesting attorney and District Attorney's Office at [COVID19OR@da.ocgov.com](mailto:COVID19OR@da.ocgov.com) with confirmation that the case was added to the Court's calendar.

Defendants will not be transported for these hearings; attorneys with 977 authority will be making appearances. The Judge will initiate a conference call when the matter is ready to be heard.

### Other Emergency Motions

Other emergency motions should be sent to the emergency fax numbers or email addresses previously provided.