



Superior Court of California County of Orange ***News Release***

Public Information Office
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March 13, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Update: Coronavirus (COVID 19) Information

Santa Ana, CA – Recognizing the severity of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak nationally and internationally, Orange County Superior Court Presiding Judge Nakamura has taken steps to help control its spread within the community.

“The Court continues to recognize its responsibility to provide access to justice and protect all constitutional rights of all residents of Orange County in these difficult and challenging times,” said Kirk Nakamura, Orange County Superior Court Presiding Judge.

DECREASING THE NUMBER OF JURORS SUMMONED

The Court made steps which will significantly reduce the number of jurors summoned to serve in all trials. The Court will suspend all unlimited civil jury trials until May 1, 2020. The court will reduce the numbers of summoned jurors in criminal trials and will stagger the times the jurors are ordered to appear. The court is working closely with the District Attorney, the Public Defender and other stakeholders to postpone cases within the confines of the law.

The Court mandated that all civil appearances before the court be conducted via audio video call-in software system CourtCall until May 1, 2020. Personal appearances in the Court will be permitted only in hearings or trials where witnesses are expected to testify. (See attached administrative order).

CONTINUING TRAFFIC ARRAIGNMENTS AND SMALL CLAIMS CASE TYPES

The Court will postpone all traffic arraignments for 45 days and small claims case types to avoid appearances of traffic defendants, small claims litigants and witnesses.

MAINTAINING ACCESS FOR CIVIL HARASSMENT AND UNLAWFUL DETAINER CASES

In order to assure access to litigants seeking protective orders Civil Harassment calendars will continue to be heard. Moreover, to comply with statutory guidelines, unlawful detainer trials will be conducted in the usual manner.

MINIMIZING EXPOSURE TO THE PUBLIC

In Probate cases the court is exploring ways to minimize the appearance of the elderly and the mental health infirm individuals to minimize the potential exposure to the virus.

The Court will be in frequent contact with all Justice Partners to continually assess the need for in-person appearances in all case types and the transportation of in-custody defendants, particularly those that might have been exposed to the virus. This includes allowing attorney appearances on behalf of out of custody defendants without the personal appearance of defendants with proper authority.

INCREASED SANITATION EFFORTS OF THE COURTS

The Court is expanding sanitation efforts in public areas with additional personnel cleaning doors, elevators, stair rails, and other frequently-touched surfaces.

If you were called for jury service and you are ill, please contact the Office of the Jury Commissioner to request a postponement prior to reporting for service, by visiting www.occourts.org/ejuror/ or by calling 657-622-7000. We will make every effort possible to grant the postponement.

We encourage the public to minimize in-person visits to the Court, by using the available online services on the Court's website <http://www.occourts.org/online-services/>

Such online services include:

- The payment of traffic tickets (<http://www.occourts.org/directory/traffic/payments-extensions.html>)
- Contact with Self-Help (<http://www.occourts.org/self-help/>)
- Accessing case information (<http://www.occourts.org/online-services/case-access/>)
- Accessing forms and information on eFiling documents with the Court (<http://www.occourts.org/online-services/efiling/>)
- Establishing online payment plans, (<https://cupportal.occourts.org/home>)
- and many others.

The public is encouraged to refer to the OC Healthcare Agency website for up-to-date information about COVID-19

symptoms: http://www.ochealthinfo.com/phs/about/epidasmt/epi/dip/prevention/novel_coronavirus

Members of the public who come to Court without presenting symptoms should still follow best personal hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing, avoiding touching the face, and coughing or sneezing into the elbow.

The Court's services and business hours otherwise remain unchanged. More information will be released as it becomes available, please visit our Court News on the web to find updates.

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Attachment:



Chambers of
KIRK NAKAMURA
PRESIDING JUDGE

Superior Court of California County of Orange

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P.O. BOX 1994
SANTA ANA, CA 92702-1994

March 13, 2020

Administrative Order No. 2020/05

SUSPENSION OF JURY TRIALS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCES IN CIVIL MATTERS UNTIL MAY 1, 2020

In response to circumstances created by the coronavirus, and in the interest of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public and Court personnel, the Court is immediately instituting the following changes:

Pursuant to Rule 3.670(f) of the California Rules of Court, the Superior Court of California, County of Orange, mandates that all civil appearances be conducted via CourtCall until May 1, 2020. Absent exceptional circumstances, all civil jury trials are suspended until May 1, 2020. Personal appearances at a Superior Court will only be permitted in those specific hearings/trials where witnesses are expected testify.

Rule 3.670(e) of the California Rules of Court outlines those situations where personal appearances are required:

- (A) Trials, hearings, and proceedings at which witnesses are expected to testify;
- (B) Hearings on temporary restraining orders;
- (C) Settlement conferences;
- (D) Trial Management conferences;
- (E) Hearings on motions in limine; and
- (F) Hearings on petitions to confirm the sale of property under the Probate Code.

Rule 3.670(f) of the California Rules of Court states that the court has discretion to modify Rule 3.670(e). Specifically, Rule 3.670(f)(3) states, "The court may permit a party to appear by telephone

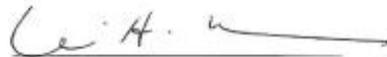
March 13, 2020

Page 2

at a hearing, conference, or proceeding under (e) if the court determines that a telephone appearance is appropriate.”

This Administrative Order is made pursuant to California Constitutional provisions and California Rules of Court (CRC) in accordance with Government Code 68070, CRC 10.603 and CRC 10.613.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 13th day of March 2020, at Santa Ana California.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk H. Nakamura", written over a horizontal line.

Kirk H. Nakamura

Presiding Judge