



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

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Court Suspends Civil Jury Trials and Other Appearances as COVID-19 Incidents Increase

Santa Ana, CA – The Orange County Superior Court announced today the suspension of new Civil and Probate in-person court trials and jury trials through January 29, 2021, to ensure that we are able to maintain safety protocols in light of the increase in positive cases. Trials currently under way will be allowed to continue to completion.

In addition, the Court is rescheduling all in-person Small Claims trials set from Monday, December 14, 2020 through January 29, 2021 and parties will be notified of their new hearing dates.

“As you know, it has been a priority of our Court to continue to operate at the highest level of functionality that we can in a safe manner, but the dramatic increase in COVID-19 positive cases in our County has required us to cut back our services,” said Presiding Judge Kirk Nakamura.

Also, the Court will only hold Criminal proceedings required to prevent the dismissal of charges against defendants. Therefore, as of Monday, December 14, 2020 the Court will implement the following changes:

- Only statutorily mandated, time-sensitive jury trials will be conducted through January 1, 2021.
- All Criminal pre-trials will be heard remotely, except for those cases approved for resolution, motion, or other matters as determined by the Court. Remote hearings may be held telephonically and/or via WebEx with relevant legal (PC 977) authority.
- Remote appearances can be coordinated by calling the designated hearing courtroom.
- Approval to add a matter on calendar may be obtained by submitting a [Misdemeanor Action Request \(MAR\)](#) or [Felony Action Request \(FAR\)](#) form.
- Attorneys may request a continuance by following the Criminal Operations [COVID-19 Protocols](#).

Parties may submit MAR or FAR forms to request of the Court to take action on a case. Some of those actions may include:

- Case resolution, including dismissals
- Settlement conferences
- Submission of Tahl form(s), plea/sentencing forms, and case advancement requests
- Warrant recall requests

“We continue to evaluate the level of our services on a daily basis in order to determine what we can safely provide to the public under the changing conditions,” Presiding Judge Nakamura said.

The Court is continually working on providing **Safe Access to Justice** and would like to remind everyone that **the use of facemasks or face coverings is mandatory for anyone entering a courthouse.** Exemptions issued by anyone other than the Court will not be honored. For Court ADA accommodations and exclusions, please email ADAinformation@occourts.org or visit this web page <http://www.occourts.org/directory/ada/>. **Social distancing**

rules will also be strictly enforced in all facilities; thus, the number of individuals entering public courtrooms and elevators will be subject to space limitations. Persons entering a courthouse are asked to maintain social distancing as recommended by the CDC. **Persons displaying possible coronavirus symptoms will not be allowed in Court facilities.**



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