



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

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Court to Resume Jury Trials

Santa Ana, CA – The Superior Court of California, County of Orange will resume jury trials, as it begins the process of reopening to the public, on Tuesday, May 26, 2020.

“We will be carefully resuming four criminal jury trials that were suspended due to the Court closure and we hope to commence additional criminal jury trials in early June,” said Orange County Superior Court Presiding Judge Kirk Nakamura. Jury trials were suspended when the Court closed to the public on March 17, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the soft re-opening, the Court is kicking off the **“Safe Access to Justice Initiative,”** a program designed to assure strict enforcement of safety precautions in order to protect jurors and all members of the public who enter Court facilities. **The use of facemasks or face coverings is mandatory for anyone entering a courthouse. Physical 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 displaying possible coronavirus symptoms will not be allowed in court facilities.**

To alleviate concerns regarding physical distancing, the Court recently implemented a mobile device-based check-in process for jurors. “Our jurors may now skip the check-in line altogether and take a seat directly in the jury assembly room,” said Jury Services Manager Pete Hernandez, adding “by accessing a dedicated Court network for jurors on their mobile device, they can check-in for jury service and obtain access to the free Wifi. All they need to use is their 9-digit juror ID number that is printed on their summons. It’s as simple as that.” The Juror Mobile-Check-in is currently available at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana, but will be available at the Harbor, North and West Justice Centers later this year.

“Our court is committed to keeping our community healthy,” said Presiding Judge Nakamura, adding “as we begin to resume jury trials, we are implementing strict cleaning procedures and physical distancing protocols to support the health and wellness of everyone that enters Court facilities. We are also significantly reducing the number of jurors being called for service at any one time.”

Remember, we cannot do it without the participation of citizens. Trial by jury is more than just a fundamental Constitutional right in the United States and California. It is a critical safeguard of the individual liberties and keep us anchored to our constitutional principles. Along with representative government, “trial by jury [is] the heart and lungs of liberty.” –John Adams

In the Orange County Superior Court Justice Centers, and in every courthouse in our nation, jurors set standards of conduct by deciding what is fair, reasonable and tolerable, and what is wrong, unreasonable and intolerable in our society. The Court cannot provide jury trials without the participation of citizens. With the **“Safe Access to Justice Initiative,”** the Court is ready to safely welcome this critical part of the justice system back into our courtrooms.

Jurors are encouraged to follow step one of their summons and complete their online questionnaire before they come to the Court. For more information on jury service, visit www.occourts.org and click on “Jury Service,” or call the Office of the Jury Commissioner at (657) 622-7000.

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