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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
NO. GAO 2020-1

WHEREAS:

1) Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington State Supreme Court has adopted Order No. 25700- B-602 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 due to the public health emergency pursuant to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus/COVID-19;

2) Clark County Public Health has previously recommended cancelling of large gatherings of 250 people or more in order to minimize the potential health impacts of COVID-19; on March 15, 2020 the Center for Disease Control now recommends against gatherings of 50 or more people;

1 3) On March 13, 2020 the Clark County Council Chair approved a state of
2 emergency resolution for Clark County regarding the COVID-19 virus to go to the full
3 Clark County Council for approval;
4

5 4) On March 13, 2020, in coordination with Clark County Public Health, Vancouver
6 City Manager Eric Holmes issued a Declaration of Civil Emergency for the City of
7 Vancouver in response to novel coronavirus COVID-19;

8 5) On March 13, 2020 Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries closed facilities through at
9 least March 29, 2020 and Governor Inslee ordered K-12 public and private schools in
10 Washington to close through April 24, 2020.
11

12 6) Clark County District Court serves both Clark County and the City of Vancouver
13 and is a shared courthouse with Clark County Superior Court. District Court frequently
14 serves close to 200 litigants per day who appear with family, friends, and attorneys on
15 one floor of the courthouse to attend motion hearings, protection order hearings,
16 arraignments, trials, infraction hearings, small claims trials, civil hearings, and probation
17 hearings. This list is only some, not all, of the matters heard each day and does not
18 include numbers for the people also appearing at the courthouse on Superior Court
19 matters. Given the number of identified and projected COVID-19 cases in Washington
20 State and the risk to public, court staff, witnesses, jurors and any other parties
21 scheduled to appear in court;
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1 Therefore, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that effective Monday, March 16, 2020:

- 2 1) All infraction hearings currently scheduled that require a court appearance of any
3 party will be rescheduled to a later date. Mail-in mitigation and contested
4 hearings will still be heard;
- 5
- 6 2) All civil ex parte motions will continue to be processed; civil motions may be
7 noted and heard without oral argument or telephonically (see policy below);
- 8 3) All Small Claims, Impounds, and Name Change Petitions will be scheduled out
9 past May 31, 2020 pending any further emergency orders unless an emergency
10 exception is granted by the court upon written request to the judge. Upon judicial
11 determination of an emergent need the hearing may be accomplished via
12 telephonic hearing;
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- 14 4) Any currently set Small Claims or other civil matters shall be rescheduled or
15 handled telephonically at the discretion and direction of the assigned judicial
16 department;
- 17
- 18 5) Petitions for Anti-Harassment and Stalking Protection Orders and review of
19 Criminal No-Contact Orders will proceed as currently scheduled. Motions to
20 rescind or modify Criminal No-Contact Orders will be granted a hearing only
21 upon judicial determination, otherwise will be set for the next regularly scheduled
22 court date;
- 23
- 24 6) Due to the Court's reduced ability to obtain an adequate number of jurors and
25 potential impact to the ability of attorneys and litigants to appear, the time period
26 of the continuances implemented by this Administrative Order will be excluded
27 periods under CrRLJ 3.3 Time for Trial Rule;
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- 1 7) All criminal trials currently scheduled will be continued past April 30, 2020; all civil
2 trials currently scheduled will be continued past June 30, 2020;
- 3 8) Any out of custody criminal hearings currently scheduled to include, but not
4 limited to, mandatory pre-trial, reviews, change of pleas, and trial settings shall
5 be rescheduled by summons at a later date;
- 6 9) Criminal out of custody arraignments shall be cancelled and rescheduled by
7 summons to a date after April 30, 2020; in custody arraignments shall proceed as
8 scheduled;
- 9 10) Review hearings set to determine compliance with any order issued to surrender
10 weapons, including both criminal and civil orders, will be scheduled per the usual
11 rules and practice of the court;
- 12 11) Telephonic hearings: if there is a request for or requirement by the court for a
13 litigant to appear by telephone, the party/defendant and/or attorney is responsible
14 for providing the court good working telephone numbers. Time of hearing for
15 telephonic hearings will be the time period starting at the scheduled time and
16 continuing four (4) hours past the scheduled time. The parties are expected to
17 continue to make themselves available until their case is called. Defendants who
18 requested to appear telephonically, but fail to pick up the phone when their case
19 is called, shall be treated like any other failure to appear and a bench warrant
20 may issue after the court has made reasonable attempts at reaching the party;
- 21 12) All in-custody matters will be handled via video conferencing;
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1 13) All persons present in any courtroom in District Court, to the extent practicable,
2 must observe social distancing and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from
3 any other person;

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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.

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16 Clark County District Court and Camas/Washougal Municipal Courts will remain
17 open. Staff in the court's offices will be available by telephone, mail will be received,
18 and offices will remain open for filings. The public is encouraged to continue utilizing
19 Court services while following all applicable public health guidelines.

20 The Court will review and amend this Administrative Order no later than April 30,
21 2020.

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24 Dated this 16th day of March, 2020.

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27 KRISTEN L. PARCHER
28 ACTING PRESIDING JUDGE