



**Superior Court of California  
County of Sacramento**

March 30, 2020

**RUSSELL L. HOM**  
Presiding Judge

Dear Members of the Sacramento Legal Community:

On behalf of the Sacramento Superior Court, I provide this update regarding the status of court operations amid the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, the temporary closure of the court runs through March 30, 2020, pursuant to the Order re: Temporary Court Closure (Temp Closure Order) issued on March 19, 2020. During the temporary closure, the court has serviced the enumerated emergency matters listed in the Temp Closure Order.

On March 23, 2020, California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye issued an order suspending all jury trials in the superior court of California for 60 days. As noted by the Chief Justice, courts cannot comply with the stringent health directives and restrictions established by the State “and continue to operate as they have in the past. Court proceedings require gatherings of court staff, litigants, attorneys, witnesses, and juries, well in excess of the numbers allowed for gathering under current executive and health orders.” On March 28, 2020 the Judicial Council of California unanimously recommended that the Chief Justice take action, pursuant Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N 38-20, to permit courts to conduct judicial proceedings and court operations remotely, in order to protect the health and safety of the public, court personnel, judicial officers, litigants, and witnesses. As a result of the unsettled nature of the current public health risk from the COVID-19 virus, I have decided to continue the temporary closure until April 16, 2020. At that time I will reassess the need to restrict access to the court and minimize staff levels.

Although, effective today I’ve extended the Temporary Court Closure until April 16, 2020, I have also issued successive orders adding to that list of matters. While we have increased some court services incrementally, we remain focused on increasing services for only “essential” matters given the ongoing “stay-at-home” orders issued by the County Public Health Department and the Governor’s Office. Such orders apply for the health and safety of all members of the public, including our court personnel.

In our Family Law and Probate Courts, we continue to service essential functions for Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse Restraining Orders, Ex Parte Emergency Family Law Applications, and Ex Parte Emergency Petitions for Temporary Conservatorship and

Guardianship. These functions are being supported by the minimum necessary court personnel. Filings for these matters are being accepted only by drop-box at the Family Relations Courthouse (FRC) or through email. If hearings are necessary, they will be held telephonically. With exception of the drop-box, the FRC building remains closed to the public. At our Carol Miller Justice Center (CMJC), essential functions continue to include ex parte emergency proceedings in unlawful detainer cases. The CMJC building remains closed to the public. For general civil, essential functions continue to include ex parte applications for Civil Harassment Restraining Orders and Gun Violence Restraining Orders. We will also accept general Civil Ex Parte Applications for Emergency Relief (e.g., TRO). These civil matters must be filed by drop-box at the Gordon D. Schaber Courthouse (GDS). If hearings are necessary, they will be held telephonically. GDS and the Hall of Justice buildings remain closed to the general public. Please refer to the court's website for public notices regarding these operations and filing instructions.

As to other civil matters generally, filings are not due through April 16, 2020, pursuant to Section 1 of the Order re: Implementation of Emergency Relief, issued March 17, 2020 (Emergency Relief Order). Please continue to check the court's website for potential extension of such time period. We request that civil filings not be submitted for non-essential civil matters during the "holiday" period declared by the Emergency Relief Order and during any potential extension period. All hearing dates, including trial dates, for non-essential civil matters remain continued until further notice. Individual judges, in their discretion, may set new dates, may defer setting new dates, or may elect to reset/utilize the previously scheduled dates if they are far enough in the future. Please refer to future minute orders and other notices that may be provided by your assigned department for further information. If you have not received any notice for your case, your matter will remain continued until such further notice is provided. As for trial dates, once the court's civil operations are fully restored, I intend to reset trial dates considering appropriate factors including granted preferences, when the trial was set prior the Emergency Relief Order, etc.

With respect to criminal matters, we are developing protocols to permit the hearing of mandated proceedings through the use of remote audio and video technology.

As you can imagine, our immediate steps during this crisis have been made towards maintaining the most critical court functions. This includes our next significant increase in operations on April 1, 2020 for criminal cases involving "essential" proceedings that must be heard promptly under law notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to assess the potential to increase civil operations within the parameters of applicable public health orders and with due regard to the health and safety of the public and court employees. We look forward to such increases as soon as allowable.

I would urge the public to go to the Sacramento Superior Court website for specific information regarding how our current temporary closures may impact your case.

I appreciate your patience, understanding and cooperation during this unprecedented time.

Russell L. Hom  
Presiding Judge