

IN THE KING COUNTY DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON AND THE CITIES OF AUBURN, BELLEVUE, BURIEN,
COVINGTON, DUVALL, KENMORE, REDMOND, SHORELINE, AND VASHON ISLAND

IN THE MATTER OF THE EMERGENCY) EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TO THE THREAT TO PUBLIC) ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
HEALTH. _____)
) NO. 2 -2020
)

This matter comes before the Court on the public health emergency in King County:

1. On February 29, 2020, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency due to the public health emergency posed by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID – 19).
2. On March 4, 2020 Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington State Supreme Court adopted Order No. 25700-B-602, granting emergency authority upon all Washington courts 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 issued an emergency order in response to the public health emergency that affects operations of trial courts in Washington State; and
3. On March 11, 2020 the Governor imposed additional restrictions prohibiting gatherings of more than 250 people within King, Snohomish, and Pierce County due to the danger of continued spread of the virus and the increasing danger the virus presents to the health care system in the region;
4. On March 11, 2020, Dr. Jeff Duchin, Health Officer for Public Health – Seattle & King County, issued a parallel local Health Officer Order for King County to prohibit gatherings of fewer than 250 people unless measures are taken by event organizers to minimize risk;
5. The King County District Court's 25 courts rooms are all high volume courtrooms and collectively handle more than 100,000 matters each year for both the County as well as the cities that contract with the Court for District Court services, it is therefore necessary for the King County District Court to make modifications to court operations to allow for the orderly transition to a system of work that will allow for implementation of systems and procedures that will meet the directive of the County Public Health Order;

6. On March 12, 2020, the King County District Court ordered a postponement and rescheduling of most court functions effective March 13, 2020 with limited exceptions.
7. Effective March 16, 2020, the Governor and King County Executive Dow Constantine ordered that all gatherings with over 50 participants are prohibited until further notice and that all gatherings under 50 participants are prohibited until further notice unless certain criteria for hygiene and social distancing are met.
8. When members of the public are summoned as jurors they are required to wait in a large jury room filled with other prospective jurors awaiting being called to a courtroom. When potential jurors go through jury selection they are seated in close quarters to one another so that many jurors can be questioned to determine their qualifications for service on a particular case. Once a jury is selected they are required to sit in the jury box during the trial in close proximity to one another. During trial breaks and when a jury deliberates jurors are required to spend time together in close quarters in jury deliberation rooms. These conditions do not comport with the recommendations and requirements outlined by the Governor, County Executive and Public Health Officials for social distancing.

Therefore, it is hereby ordered that:

- A. Effective Tuesday March 17, 2020, all currently scheduled Community Court hearings will be postponed and rescheduled by the court clerks to another date.
- B. The District Court is suspending all jury summons for District Court effective March 17, 2020. Jury summons are suspended until April 27, 2020. Jury personnel shall call of all jurors summoned for jury duty in District Court immediately. All jury trials scheduled from March 17- April 24, 2020 will be continued to a later date. All other criminal hearings for in custody defendants will proceed as scheduled except as impacted by paragraph C.
- C. All District Court hearings scheduled for March 17, 18, and 19, 2020, that were not previously rescheduled by Emergency Order 1 issued on March 12, 2020, except the in custody first and second appearance calendars, shall be postponed and rescheduled by the court clerks to another date. This three day closure is intended to give District Court leadership the opportunity to plan our work plans moving forward during this health crisis.

D. The Court rescinds the portion of Emergency Order 1 dated March 12, 2020 section (j) that allowed for the noting and hearing of civil motions without oral argument in light of the equities involved as many civil litigants that appear before the District Court are pro se.

For all hearings currently pending and for hearings on new cases filed during the pendency of this order that are delayed by effect of this order, all delays/continuances made under Emergency Order 1 dated March 12, 2020 and this order are made for good cause in light of this ongoing health crisis and shall be excluded periods for purposes of Speedy Trial, CrRLJ 3.3, CrRLJ 4.1, IRLJ 2.2, IRLJ 2.4, IRLJ 2.6, and any other applicable court rule. The Court finds that COVID - 19 is a serious danger to the public at large and constitutes an unavoidable circumstance beyond the control of the Court and the parties that appear before the court.

It is Further Ordered that all hearings delayed by this order notices will be mailed to the parties of the next scheduled hearing date via US mail. Any party needing to update their mailing address should contact the court clerk at (206) 205-9200.

This order may be modified consistent with the Court's continual assessment of the needs of the community as well as the recommendations of public health officials.

DATED this 16 day of March, 2020



Presiding Judge