



Superior Court of California County of Tuolumne

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Hector X. Gonzalez, Jr.
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Justice Partners
FROM: Hector X. Gonzalez, Jr., Court Executive Officer and Jury Commissioner
RE: Response to Coronavirus
DATE: March 18, 2020

Despite the fact that to date Tuolumne County does not have a reported case of Coronavirus, the Court takes seriously the potential risk to the public, staff, parties and justice partners. For that reason, the Court is taking a proactive approach to minimize public interaction in our Court facilities but still maintain a level of operation needed to provide the judicial services to our community. Accordingly, at this time our Court locations will remain open but will operate with the following preventative actions being taken by the Court. However, if the Coronavirus situation worsens in our county, the Court will reassess its response and may take further emergency actions.

To have the authority to carry out some of the actions listed below, we are requesting an emergency order. Part of the process for requesting an emergency order is to notify the Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, and other justice partners regarding the Court's intention to request an emergency order. For that reason I've attached the draft emergency order. The requested emergency order is a template; the actions that the Court is requesting authority to carry out will have a checked box and a date specifying the time period for the requested authority.

If you have any concerns or opposition to the emergency order, I would appreciate you letting me know. I'm sure you understand that given how quickly the Coronavirus situation is developing, the Court needs to act quickly and will be submitting the requested emergency order by the end of business on Thursday, March 19th. However, you have every right to directly contact the Judicial Council to express your concerns or opposition with or without notification to the Court. If you would like to contact the Judicial Council, the following person is the point of contact: Legal Services Supervising Attorney Charles Perkins, 415-865-4609; charles.perkins@jud.ca.gov; 415-865-8767 (fax).

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Preventative Actions

1. Court will be requesting an emergency order from the Chief Justice that will allow the Court to take emergency steps from 3/23/20 until 4/22/20. In the requested emergency order the Court is seeking authority for actions that may be implemented in the future if necessary and for actions to be taken immediately. Below are the actions that the Court will take immediately.
2. Beginning 3/23/20 all jury trials will be continued and jurors summoned for those matters will be notified that they do not have to report for jury duty
3. On a case-by-case basis, for uncontested matters where possible, the Court will continue the matters to a date past 4/22/20
4. For all other matters that need to proceed, where possible the Court will do the following:
 - a. Allow CourtCall.
 - b. Allow only 25 persons in the Courtroom at any time, all other persons will be sent to another Courtroom for the matter to be heard or asked to return at a later time.
 - c. Eliminate Court staff ("runners") working in close proximity with parties.
5. Beginning 3/19/20, the civil counter will be closed and all persons needing to do civil filings will be directed to use the civil drop box or go to the criminal counter.
6. Beginning immediately, the Self Help Center will be closed and all persons needing self help assistance will be directed to call the Self-Help number to receive assistance by phone.
7. Beginning immediately, Court will stop providing mediation services in person. Persons will be provided mediation services by phone, video or online.
8. Beginning immediately, guardianship and conservatorship interviews and/or investigations will be rescheduled and/or done via video/Skype/phone alternatives.
9. Beginning immediately for all non-mandatory citations where the defendant requests to appear, appearance dates will be set 90 days out.
10. For arrest/release citations with appearance dates set by law enforcement, the Court will request that law enforcement to set the appearance date 60 to 90 days out, except for arrests/releases related to domestic violence.

END