



Superior Court of California

County of Tuolumne

Contact Re Press Release: Hector Gonzalez, Jr.

Court Executive Officer - Jury Commissioner

email: hgonzalez@tuolumne.courts.ca.gov

Phone: (209) 533-5556

To: Local Media

From: Hector X. Gonzalez, Jr., Court Executive Officer

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Re: Superior Court is Temporarily Reducing Operations to Essential Functions and Matters Starting April 20th

The Tuolumne County Superior Court has decided to reduce court operations to mostly essential functions/matters starting with the target date of Monday, April 20, and ending May 15. The reason the court is reducing operations further is to minimize the potential exposure of court staff, judges, attorneys, parties, and other court users to COVID-19. Tuolumne County has been fortunate in that for an extended period, we've had very few COVID-19 cases. However, according to available data and predictive models, the greatest potential for the number of COVID-19 cases to increase in our county will be in the next few weeks. The court will be requesting an extension of our current emergency order from the Chief Justice that will allow the court to take the following emergency steps from April 20, 2020 until May 15, 2020.

For the four weeks of April 20 through May 15, the court will be operating at the level of essential functions/matters. We are planning to reduce our calendars to only two courtrooms running Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, the plan is to run one courtroom. Those courtrooms are going to hear "essential matters," such as in-custody no time-waiver matters, requests for protective orders, requests for emergency injunctive relief, and warrants. Our judges may also select certain non-essential matters to be heard.

Otherwise, all other calendared cases will be continued. However, for the first day of our reduction, Monday April 20, most cases that are on calendar will be heard. For Tuesday, April 21, all juvenile cases will be heard, but civil and criminal cases will be continued. Attorneys and parties will receive notice stating the specific time and date to which their case has been continued.

Regarding non-essential cases mentioned above, our judges will have the discretion to continue to hear a limited number of non-essential cases already on calendar between April 20 and May 15, that they believe can be heard expeditiously. If your case is one that the judges have decided to keep on calendar, if you have provided an email address to the court, the court will advise you by email that your case is still on calendar in advance of your current court date. If you have not provided the court with an email address, then check the

court website where the court calendar is posted. On the website, you can see if your case is still on calendar. The court calendar on the website is subject to change. However, if your case is still on the website calendar the day before it is set to be heard, your case will be heard the next day. If you would like to confirm that your case is still going to be heard, for civil cases please call (209) 533-5555, and for criminal cases please call (209) 533-5563.

The goal of the court's reduction of operations is to minimize exposure to COVID-19 by minimizing the number of people who need to come to court to work or to appear for cases. Consequently, the number of already calendared cases that will be kept on calendar will be kept to a minimum.

In addition to the reduction of courtrooms operating, the court will also be reducing the hours that our public counter is available to accept filings. Starting April 20, the remaining public counter located at the courthouse location on 60 N. Washington Street will reduce its hours to 8 AM to 1:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The civil division public counter located at the old courthouse at 41 W. Yaney Avenue was closed on March 19 as an earlier COVID-19 preventative action, and will remain closed until further notice. Persons needing to do civil filings can use the civil division drop box located at the old courthouse lobby, or can go to the public counter located at 60 N. Washington Street. The court is working on technology options that will allow for "remote presence" in our courtrooms using teleconferencing platforms such as "WebEx" or "Zoom". The court is now encouraging the use of CourtCall where a court appearance can be made telephonically for cases.

We are also developing a weekly court calendar to be posted on the court website that will show which courtrooms will be running during the period of reduced operations for essential functions/matters. Please check our court website frequently for forthcoming orders and notices that will provide greater detail regarding the court's reduction to essential functions/matters.

Despite the low number of reported cases of COVID-19, the court believes the prudent course is to take the steps now to reduce operations when we have sufficient time to do so in a deliberative manner. With the assistance of attorneys, parties and the public, we hope to get through these challenging times.

END OF PRESS RELEASE