

**SPOKANE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT
STATE OF WASHINGTON**

IN THE MATTER OF THE EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TO THE THREAT TO PUBLIC
HEALTH

EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

NO. 1 _____

This matter comes before the Court on the public health emergency in Washington State and Spokane County:

- As of March 16th, 2020, Washington State Governor, Jay Inslee ordered a statewide shutdown of all restaurants, bars, entertainment and recreational facilities. Governor Inslee also prohibited the gathering of more than 50 people. Gatherings of less than 50 people are prohibited unless previous criteria for public health and social distancing are met.
- As of March 15th, 2020, in King County, Washington there are approximately 420 confirmed cases and 37 deaths. On Friday, March 14th, 2020, Dr. Bob Lutz, Spokane County Health Officer announced three (3) confirmed cases in Spokane County, Washington with expectations that number will increase.
- On March 14th, 2020, the Spokane County District Court was informed that a Spokane County District Court (SCDC) employee had been exposed to COVID-19.
- On March 14th and March 13th, 2020, Dr. Bob Lutz, Spokane County Health Officer recommended measures to slow the spread of COVID-19. Those recommendations included but were not limited to cancelling all scheduled events over 250 attendees for the next 30 days, effective immediately, and social distancing.
- On March 13th, 2020, Washington State Governor, Jay Inslee ordered statewide school closure for six weeks amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

- On March 13th, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency due to the public health emergency posed by the spread of COVID-19.
- On March 4th, 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 order, and to take further actions concerning court operations, as warranted to address the current state of emergency issued as an emergency order in response to the public health emergency that affects operation of trial courts in Washington State.
- On February 29th, 2020, Washington State Governor, Jay Inslee declared a state-wide emergency due to the public health emergency posed by the spread of COVID-19.
- Spokane County District Court's courtrooms are high-volume courtrooms and collectively handle more than 100,000 matters each year for both the County as well as cities that contract with the Court for District Court services. Therefore, it is necessary for the Spokane County District Court to make modifications to the 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 concerns and directives required.

Therefore, it is hereby ordered that effective Tuesday, March 17th, 2020, with the following exceptions, all currently scheduled Court hearings shall be postponed and rescheduled by the court clerks to another date.

- All non-priority cases scheduled **prior to March 17th, 2020**, shall continue to be set for hearing but the Court strongly encourages off-docket continuances when possible; parties with a court hearing scheduled prior to or on March 17th, 2020, should **immediately** contact their attorney if represented to request a continuance or call (509) 477-4770 to request a continuance.
- Spokane County District Court Judges will not be issuing warrants for failures to appear for non-priority court hearings unless determined necessary by the Judge(s) on a case-by-case basis. The District Court Judge will issue a "Second Chance Notice" with a new court date and send notice whenever feasible.
- In custody bench trials shall proceed as currently scheduled unless continued by the parties.
- Bench warrant recalls should be filed and agreed off docket.
- Traffic Infractions cases with Mitigation or Contested hearing **ONLY IF** the hearing is scheduled for an online hearing or hearing with only written materials submitted without the need for any party to appear in court. All infraction hearings that require the appearance of any party will be rescheduled to a later date.

- Criminal cases where the defendant is detained in custody on that particular criminal case will proceed as currently scheduled. New criminal cases where a defendant is detained on that particular case will continue to be scheduled for hearing per the usual rules and practice of the court.
- Petitions for Protection Order hearings will proceed as currently scheduled – including without limitation, domestic violence, anti-harassment, sexual assault, stalking or any other type of order new petitions for such orders will also be scheduled per the usual rules and practice of the court.
- Review Hearings set to determine compliance with any **order issued to surrender weapons**, including orders issued in either criminal and civil cases, will continue as normally scheduled even if an underlying criminal case is being rescheduled to a later date.
- Name Change Petitions may be scheduled if a written request to the judge is presented explaining the emergent need for the name change. Upon a judicial determination of an emergent need, the Court clerk will set a hearing which may be accomplished via a telephonic or video hearing.
- Matters relating to the impound of motor vehicle(s) or animals may be scheduled if a written request to the judge is presented explaining the emergent need for a hearing. Upon a judicial determination of an emergent need the Court clerk will set a hearing which may be accomplished via a telephonic or video hearing.
- Civil Motions may be noted and heard without oral argument; ex-parte matters will continue to be processed.
- Civil weddings scheduled prior to Monday, March 16th, 2020 shall be contacted to inquire about rescheduling or conducting the wedding ceremony on non-court premises at the discretion of the assigned District Court Judge.
- Any civil weddings scheduled on or after March 16th, 2020, will be at the discretion of the assigned Spokane County District Court Judge and shall not be conducted at SCDC Courthouse locations.
- Litigants and attorneys who enter the Spokane County District Court Courthouses are expected, as much as possible, to adhere to a six-foot social distancing radius from court staff, as well as other litigants and attorneys.
- Litigants and attorneys who feel sick should not enter the Spokane County District Court Courthouses. Anyone deemed by the Court or staff to exhibit illness symptoms may be ordered to leave.

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, the delay/continuance shall constitute an excluded period 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.

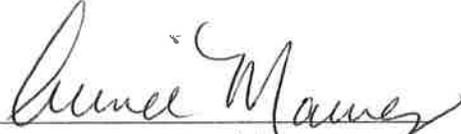
It is further ordered that all hearings delayed by this order notices will be mailed to the parties of the next scheduled hearing date via, US mail. Any partying needing to update their mailing address should contact the court clerk at (509) 477-4770 or via email at Criminal and Infraction Clerk's Office – dccasemgmt@spokanecounty.org Civil Clerk's Office – dccivil@spokanecounty.org

For all hearings not continued by effect of this rule, telephonic and video hearings will be permitted to the greatest extent possible to encourage social distancing as recommended by both the Centers for Disease Control and local public health officials.

All courthouse locations will remain open; however, the public is encouraged to contact the court via telephone or email.

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

DATED this 16th day of March, 2020


Acting Presiding Judge Aimee Maurer