

IN THE DISTRICT COURT FOR SKAGIT COUNTY and in the MUNICIPAL COURTS
OF ANACORTES, BURLINGTON, and MOUNT VERNON, WASHINGTON

IN THE MATTER OF

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO
COVID-19 OUTBREAK

NO. 21-7

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Washington has previously declared a state of emergency in all counties of Washington due to the public health emergency caused by the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19); and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners of Skagit County have declared a state of emergency in Skagit County due to the same public health concerns; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Supreme Court has adopted various administrative orders authorizing certain specific emergency measures to address the safety of the public and of court employees; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic remains an ongoing threat to the health of the people of Skagit County; and

WHEREAS, the infection and hospitalization rate for COVID-19 cases has increased substantially over the past month; and,

WHEREAS, the percentage of the Skagit County population who are fully vaccinated remains at approximately 54% of the population; and

WHEREAS, in person hearings, jury trials, and other court matters should remain open to the public with appropriate public health measures in place; and,

WHEREAS, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as much as possible, public health measures in addition to those required under previous emergency administrative orders should be implemented;

NOW THEREFORE, Consistent with orders to all courts from the Washington State Supreme Court and in keeping with the applicable directions from the Governor

combined with a statewide plan for gradual reopening of government and business facilities, and, so long as the following orders remain consistent with Washington State Supreme Court Administrative Orders, the following schedule will be observed by Skagit County District Court:

1. **OPEN COURTS:** Continuing from July 1, 2021, all courtrooms in all departments of Skagit County District and Municipal Courts are open to litigants and to the public. All hearings shall continue as in person appearances only unless prior written approval of a judicial officer upon good cause shown for allowing the hearing via virtual platform.
2. **CRIMINAL JURY TRIALS:** Continuing from July 1, 2021, all departments of the Skagit County District and Municipal Courts shall hold jury trials in the courtrooms assigned to the various departments.
3. **PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES – JURY TRIALS:** In order to provide for the safety of litigants and jurors, public health measures may be in place during jury trials. These measures may include but not be limited to the requirement for surgical masks, social distancing, and health screenings prior to entering the courtroom.
4. **GUILTY PLEAS:**
 - a. Guilty pleas shall continue as in person appearances only unless **prior written approval** of a judicial officer upon good cause shown for allowing the plea via virtual platform. Attorneys should continue to consult with the calendaring clerk to schedule guilty pleas.
 - b. Beginning August 1, 2021, guilty pleas for individuals represented by the Office of Public Defense and who do not require the services of an interpreter shall be scheduled only on Thursday afternoons at 1:30 pm in District Court Courtroom 1. Cases will be scheduled at 15 minute intervals. Individuals requiring the services of an interpreter shall continue to resolve their cases on the 8:30 am Wednesday interpreter calendar.
 - c. Guilty pleas for private attorney criminal matters shall continue to be scheduled at 15 minute intervals on Tuesday mornings, beginning at 9:00 am. Parties wishing to schedule a guilty plea should contact the calendaring clerk to obtain a time slot. Private attorney criminal matters where the defendant requires the services of an interpreter, other than agreed motions for

continuance, shall be heard on the 8:30 am Wednesday interpreter calendar at the Community Justice Center.

- d. Guilty pleas for individuals represented by the Office of Public Defense may be scheduled on the Tuesday morning private attorney calendar if time slots are available. Parties wishing to schedule a guilty plea should contact the calendaring clerk to obtain a time slot.

- 5. **DUI AND DV ARRAIGNMENTS:** Arraignments for Driving Under the Influence, Physical Control of a Motor Vehicle while Under the Influence, and all Domestic Violence charges shall continue as in person appearances only absent **prior written approval** of a judicial officer upon good cause shown for allowing the arraignment via virtual platform.

6. **PROBATION REVIEW HEARINGS:**

- a. Beginning August 1, 2021, all public defender probation hearings will be scheduled at every Wednesday readiness calendar through September 30, 2021.
- b. Ex parte continuances for first and second probation review hearings may be entered by agreement of the parties if consistent with the recommendation of the probation officer.
- c. Pro se probation review hearings, other than those requiring the services of an interpreter, will be held as in person hearings on Tuesdays at 2:00 pm.
- d. Private attorney probation review hearings, other than those requiring the services of an interpreter, will be held as in person hearings on the first Wednesday of each month at 8:30 am and 1:30 pm.

- 7. **MOTIONS TO RESCIND NO CONTACT ORDERS AND MOTIONS TO QUASH BENCH WARRANTS:** Continuing from July 1, 2021 motions to rescind no contact orders and motions to quash bench warrants shall be scheduled as in person hearings on the 1:30 motion calendar the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month. Temporary Emergency Policy No. 20-02 has been rescinded.

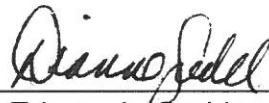
- 8. **AGREED CONTINUANCES:** Agreed Continuances of readiness, motion hearings, and trial dates shall continue to be completed ex parte and submitted in advance of the readiness hearings whenever possible.

9. **READINESS HEARINGS:** Readiness hearings shall continue as in person appearances only unless **prior written approval** of a judicial officer upon good cause shown for allowing the hearing via virtual platform.
10. **RELICENSING CLINIC:** The District Court relicensing clinic will resume as an in person clinic on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at 1:30 pm in courtroom 1 beginning August 11, 2021.
11. **FTAs FOR CRIMINAL CHARGES AND TRAFFIC INFRACTIONS:** Continuing from July 1, 2021, Temporary Emergency Policy No. 20-01 has been rescinded. The court has resumed reporting of FTAs on criminal cases and traffic infractions to the appropriate state agencies. Unpaid fines will be assigned to collections and late fees and penalties imposed pursuant to policies implemented prior to the COVID 19 emergency.
12. **COMMUNITY COURT:** Community court will continue to be conducted in person in all departments.
13. **CIVIL JURY TRIALS:** Civil jury trials will resume September 1, 2021. Upon good cause shown, parties may request a civil jury trial to be set sooner than September 1, 2021.
14. **COURT CLERKS' OFFICES:** The Skagit County District Court Clerk's Office and Municipal Court Clerk's Offices remain open for in person service. People are encouraged to access court clerk services by phone, email, fax, drop box, or regular mail if possible. Anyone coming in person to the clerk's counter for assistance must follow all public health guidelines issued by the Skagit County Department of Public Health and as directed by signage and/or court personnel.
15. **CRIMINAL PRETRIAL MOTIONS:** All pretrial criminal motions, including motions which do not require live testimony, shall be held as in person hearings.
16. **SMALL CLAIMS FIRST APPEARANCES:** Small claims appearance and review hearings shall resume as in person hearings on August 1, 2021. Virtual platform shall not be offered for small claims first appearance or review hearings except by **prior written approval** of a judicial officer upon good cause shown.

17. **CIVIL MOTIONS:** Civil motions shall continue as in person appearances only unless prior written approval of a judicial officer upon good cause shown for allowing the hearing via virtual platform.
18. **ANTI-HARASSMENT HEARINGS:** All hearings for anti-harassment orders shall continue as in person appearances only unless prior written approval of a judicial officer upon good cause shown for allowing the hearing via virtual platform.
19. **INDIVIDUALS EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS:** Anyone exhibiting symptoms of illness (fever, cough, body or muscle aches, recent loss of taste or smell, runny nose, sneezing, fatigue not associated with other known conditions, headache, or sore throat) shall not be permitted in the courtroom and shall be required to leave the courtroom if such symptoms are observed.
20. **APPROVED FACIAL COVERINGS:** All parties appearing in the courtroom shall wear approved face coverings pending further order of the court. Surgical masks are available from the court clerk. Certain face coverings, such as single ply face masks, masks with vents, bandanas, and neck gaiters are ineffective, do not satisfy the face covering requirement, and are not allowed unless worn over a surgical mask. All parties shall observe public health protocols as required by the judicial officer conducting a specific calendar, hearing, or trial

Additional information on court schedules and accessing court services is available on the various websites for all court departments. Any provisions of Administrative Order 21-6 which are not inconsistent with this order shall remain in full force and effect.

DATED THIS 29th day of July, 2021.



Dianne Edmonds Goddard, District
Court Judge, Presiding