

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. 21-1

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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 numbers of positive COVID 19 cases in the State of Washington and in the United States of America is rising exponentially, and

WHEREAS, Governor Inslee has issued various emergency orders restricting in person gatherings; and;

WHEREAS the number of positive COVID 19 cases in Skagit County continues to rise; and,

WHEREAS Skagit County does not currently meet the metrics as established by Governor Inslee in 3 of 4 categories for moving from Phase 1 of reopening, and;

WHEREAS continued restriction of public gatherings is warranted to protect vulnerable populations and the public at large from infection by COVID 19 virus, and;

WHEREAS, the Presiding Judge has determined that all reasonably necessary steps to reduce court population and protect the health and welfare of court participants and the public must be taken; and

WHEREAS, the majority of District and Municipal Court hearings can be conducted via Zoom or other virtual platform, and;

WHEREAS, the clerk's offices in the various courts lack sufficient size and sufficient regular disinfecting schedules to allow adequate social distancing and adequate disinfecting of public areas as COVID 19 cases continue to rise; and,

WHEREAS, under the Skagit County Superior Court Administrative Order NO. 21-1 and Washington State Supreme Court Order NO. 25700-B-646 are incorporated herein by reference; and

WHEREAS the only courtroom of sufficient size available for jury trials in Skagit County is Skagit County Superior Court Courtroom 5, with that courtroom having priority for felony trials; and;

WHEREAS potential jurors in Skagit County District and Municipal Courts include substantial numbers of individuals in high risk categories for COVID 19 illness due to age and comorbidity, and;

WHEREAS, any prejudice to a misdemeanor offender who is not in custody resulting from a delay in holding a jury trial, absent evidence of special circumstances showing substantial prejudice to said defendant, is outweighed by the risk to public health and safety in holding a jury trial while COVID 19 cases continue to rise, resulting in undue risk of serious illness or death, and;

WHEREAS, due to these unavoidable circumstances brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic, further exclusion of time beyond January 26, 2021 is warranted.

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. **JURY TRIALS:** Jury trial dates for any and all cases with an assigned jury trial date prior to February 19, 2021 are hereby stricken.
2. **CRIMINAL JURY TRIALS:** The court finds that COVID-19 presents a serious danger in congregate settings and that the current public health emergency is an unavoidable circumstance under CrRLJ 3.3(e)(8) constituting good cause to continue all jury trials in the administration of justice. The time period from January 26, 2021 to close of business February 19, 2021 shall be excluded for purposes of calculating time for trial. CrRLJ 3.3.

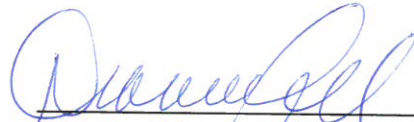
3. **CIVIL JURY TRIALS.** Counsel on non-criminal matters shall re-note said matters for trial assignment.

All parties appearing for in person hearings shall continue to submit to health screenings if requested prior to being admitted to the courtroom. 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, sore throat) shall not be permitted in the courtroom. Masks shall be worn by all participants at all times when in the courtroom. All parties shall observe social distancing requirements. Any person not complying with these requirements shall be subject to removal from the courtroom.

A complete schedule of calendars is available on the District Court website. Information on how to access Zoom or other virtual hearings is available on the District Court website.

Any provisions of Administrative Order 20-8 which are not inconsistent with this order shall remain in full force and effect.

DATED THIS 15 day of January, 2021.



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Dianne Edmonds Goddard, District  
Court Judge, Presiding