

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. 21-6

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Washington has gradually relaxed public health restrictions over the past several months as both the infection rate and hospitalization rate for COVID 19 have declined; and,

WHEREAS, the percentage of the population who are fully vaccinated continues to increase, particularly in Western Washington, resulting in lower COVID 19 infection and hospitalization rates; and,

WHEREAS the court can fully open all courtrooms, based on the declining COVID 19 cases, with appropriate COVID public health practices in place; and,

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:** Beginning July 1, 2021, all courtrooms in all departments of Skagit County District and Municipal Courts are open to litigants and to the public. Appearances may be available via Zoom or other virtual platform beyond that date as set forth herein.
2. **CRIMINAL JURY TRIALS:** Effective July 1, 2021, all departments of the Skagit County District and Municipal Courts shall resume jury trials in the courtrooms assigned to the various departments; provided,

however, jury trials in District Court may be held in the municipal courtrooms for Anacortes, Burlington, or Mount Vernon in order to hold more than one trial at a time. Participants in District Court jury trials should confirm the location for their trials.

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 to be in person hearings only unless a judicial officer grants **prior written approval** for a plea via virtual platform upon good cause shown. Attorneys should continue to consult with the calendaring clerk to schedule guilty pleas. Guilty pleas may be scheduled on the public defender trial readiness calendars through July 31, 2021.
 - b. Beginning August 1, 2021, guilty pleas for individuals represented by the Office of Public Defense shall be scheduled at 15 minute intervals every Thursday afternoon beginning at 1:30 pm in District Court courtroom 1. Guilty pleas will no longer be scheduled on the Wednesday readiness calendar after July 31, 2021.
 - 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.
 - 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.
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 will continue as in person appearances only absent **prior written approval** of a judicial officer upon good cause shown for allowing arraignment via Zoom or other virtual platform.

6. PROBATION REVIEW HEARINGS:

- a. Beginning August 1, 2021, all pro se and public defender probation hearings will be scheduled every Tuesday beginning from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm in District Court courtroom 2.
- 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.

7. MOTIONS TO RESCIND NO CONTACT ORDERS AND MOTIONS TO QUASH BENCH WARRANTS: Beginning 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. This order rescinds Temporary Emergency Policy No. 20-02.

8. AGREED TRIAL 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.

9. READINESS HEARINGS: Readiness hearings will no longer be available to participants on a virtual platform beginning July 6, 2021. Attorneys and pro se defendants must appear in person for all readiness hearings which have not been continued ex parte by agreement prior to the hearing.

10. RELICENSING CLINIC: The District Court relicensing clinic will resume on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at 1:30 pm in courtroom 1 beginning August 10, 2021.

11. FTAs FOR CRIMINAL CHARGES AND TRAFFIC INFRACTIONS: Effective July 1, 2021, Temporary Emergency Policy No. 20-01 is rescinded. The court will resume 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 be conducted in person beginning July 1, 2021 in all departments.

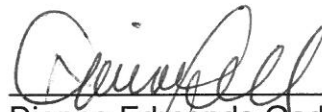
13. CIVIL JURY TRIALS: Civil jury trials will resume September 1, 2021. Upon good cause shown, parties may request a civil jury trial to be set sooner than September 1, 2021.

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. Motion hearings shall be scheduled at set intervals, and parties are encouraged to wait to enter the courtroom until the time designated for their hearing; however, the courtrooms will be open to the public.
16. **SMALL CLAIMS FIRST APPEARANCES:** Small claims appearance and review hearings shall resume as in person hearings only on August 1, 2021; however, parties may appear in person for small claims hearings prior to August 1, 2021 inasmuch as the courtroom will be open to the public. Zoom or other virtual platform shall not be offered for small claims first appearance or review hearings except by **prior written approval** of a judicial officer and only upon good cause shown after August 1., 2021.
17. **CIVIL MOTIONS:** Civil motions shall resume as in person hearings only beginning July 19, 2021 and shall not be offered on Zoom or other virtual platform. Prior to July 19, 2021, parties may appear in person for civil motions if they choose inasmuch as the courtroom will be open.
18. **ANTI-HARASSMENT HEARINGS:** Beginning July 19, 2021, all hearings for anti-harassment orders shall be conducted in person and not on a virtual platform. Parties may elect to appear in person for these hearings prior to July 19, 2021.
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:** The court shall continue to follow the guidance of the Governor and the Washington State and Skagit

County Health Departments on public health safety guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID 19. Surgical masks (available from the court clerk) may be required of all participants consistent with public health guidelines and at the discretion of the judicial officer conducting any calendar, hearing, or trial. 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 21-5 which are not inconsistent with this order shall remain in full force and effect.

DATED THIS 25th day of June, 2021.



Dianne Edmonds Goddard, District
Court Judge, Presiding