

FILED

MAR 18 2020
SUSAN J. MARINELLA
Columbia County Clerk
And Clerk of the Superior Court
By _____ Deputy

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
IN AND FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY

9	IN THE MATTER OF)	
10	THE RESPONSE BY COLUMBIA COUNTY)	NO. 2002
11	SUPERIOR COURT TO THE PUBLIC)	EMERGENCY ORDER #2
12	HEALTH EMERGENCY IN)	ON ALLOWING TELEPHONIC
13	WASHINGTON STATE)	TESTIMONY IN ALL NON-TRIAL
)	HEARING FOR ALL CASE TYPES

This matter comes before the Court on the public health emergency in Washington State.

1. On February 29th, 2020, the Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency due to the public health emergency posed by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

2. County Public Health and the Center for Disease Control has announced to the public the following on their web sites and in the press generally:

Public Health recommends that people at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible, including public places with lots of people and large gatherings where there will be close contact with others. This includes concert venues, conventions, sporting events, and crowded social gatherings.

People at higher risk include people:

- Over 60 years of age
- With underlying health conditions including include heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes
- With weakened immune systems
- Who are pregnant

Public Health has also advised “social distancing” and advised all members of Columbia County to not congregate in groups so as to not spread the COVID-19 disease to those at higher risk.

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2 3. On March 4th, 2020, Chief Justice Debra Stephens entered an Emergency Order
3 that states, in part, as follows:

4 WHEREAS, during this state of emergency, it may become necessary for courts in
5 these counties to close, relocate, or otherwise significantly modify their regular
6 operations; and

7 WHEREAS, presiding judges in these counties need sufficient authority to effectively
8 administer their courts in response to this state of emergency, including authority to
9 adopt, modify, and suspend court rules and orders as warranted to address the
10 emergency conditions.

11 NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the Court's authority to administer justice and to
12 ensure the safety of court personnel, litigants, and the public,
13 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

- 14 • The Presiding Judges of the Washington courts are authorized to adopt, modify,
15 and suspend court rules and orders, and to take further actions concerning court
16 operations as warranted to address the current public health emergency;
- 17 • Each court shall immediately transmit copies of emergency local rules adopted or
18 modified to address the public health emergency to the Administrative Office of
19 the Courts in lieu of the requirements of General Rule 7;
- 20 • Each court that closes pursuant to this Order or General Rule 21 shall sign an
21 administrative order closing the court, file the original with the clerk of the
22 affected court, and notify the Administrative Office of the Courts as soon as
23 practicable.

24 4. On March 16, 2020, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee declared a State of
25 Emergency and further banned congregation of groups of 50 or more people.

26 5. Counsel, litigations, witnesses, and spectators attend court hearings in the
27 Columbia County courthouse. There may be pretrial motions, requests for petitions,
28 guardianships, protective orders, dependency reviews, or eviction/unlawful detainer matters.
This list is not exclusive.

6. All courtroom hearings, involve the congregation of groups of people.

Therefore, IT IS ORDERED under the authority by Chief Justice Stephens' Order
and the authority as a Presiding Judge for Columbia County that the Columbia County
Superior Court may, at any judicial officer's discretion (judges and commissioners), in any
civil motions, family law hearings, civil protection order hearings, civil preliminary
proceeding, and criminal matters:

- Order telephonic or other remote communications technology for simple
appearances including omnibus/discovery/scheduling conferences, etc.;
- Order telephonic or other remote communications technology for argument;
- Order telephonic or other remote communication technology for testimony;
- This Order does not automatically apply to criminal trials;

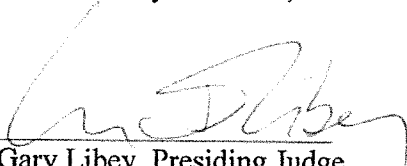
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- This Order does not apply to those arraignments which require attendance and/or bond hearings, which will continue to be held in person;
 - This Order specifically allows telephonic or other remote communication technology for criminal competency proceedings;
 - Counsel may, of course, agree to telephonic testimony in trials at any time;
 - Audience/Public attendance shall be limited so as to allow for the Constitutionally guaranteed Open Courts, but so as to enforce the advised social distancing as is necessary;

7 It is so Ordered.

8 This 16th day of March, 2020.

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12 Gary Libey, Presiding Judge
Columbia County Superior Court

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