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2
3 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON
IN AND FOR LEWIS COUNTY

4 In Re:

5 EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION LIMITING
6 COURT OPERATIONS RESULTING
7 FROM PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

GENERAL ORDER NO.

GR 21 DATED
03/16/2020

8 Pursuant to General Rule (GR) 21(a), "A court may be closed if weather,
9 technological failure or other hazardous or emergency conditions or events are or
10 become such that the safety and welfare of the employees are threatened or the court is
11 unable to operate or demands immediate action to protect the court, its employees or
12 property. Closure may be ordered by the...presiding... judge in his or her discretion
13 during the pendency of such conditions or events." In addition, the Washington State
14 Supreme Court, through Order No. 25700-B-602 issued on March 4, 2020, authorized
15 the presiding Judges of all Washington courts to "...adopt, modify, and suspend court
16 rules and orders, and to take further actions concerning court operations, as warranted
to address the current public health emergency."

17 Since the date of that order, the situation faced by Washington residents has
18 changed drastically. With mandated school closures and restrictions on other activities,
19 this court must address the continuing issues presented by the COVID-19 virus.

20 As of the date of this order, there is a public health emergency currently within
21 the state of Washington. Lewis County now has one (1) confirmed case and is under its
22 own proclamation of emergency. Proactive steps to continue to protect Lewis County
residents and those in contact with the justice system in Lewis County are necessary.

23 With nearly 800 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and over 40 deaths resulting, the
24 courts have worked closely with local, state and federal health officials to protect those
25 coming into contact with the justice system. To properly respond to COVID-19, the
26 Lewis County Superior Court is taking the following actions (Orders):

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION LIMITING
COURT OPERATIONS RESULTING
FROM PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

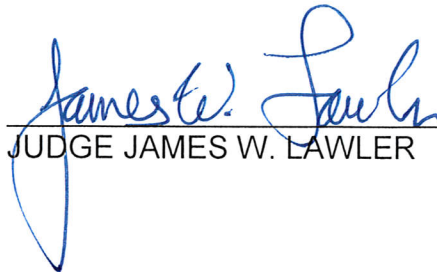
- 1 1. Criminal Rule (CrR) 3.3 is hereby suspended until April 27, 2020.
- 2 2. All criminal jury trials scheduled between March 9 and April 24, 2020 are
3 hereby continued.
 - 4 a. These cases shall be reviewed on April 30, 2020 on the regularly
5 scheduled criminal calendar.
 - 6 b. At that hearing, speedy trial will be recalculated and a new trial date
7 will be set.
- 8 3. All criminal bench trials will be addressed on an individual basis.
 - 9 a. The court will consider the urgency, custody status of the defendant,
10 and the number of participants/witnesses anticipated by the parties.
- 11 4. Criminal hearings with out of custody defendants will be continued to a date
12 to be determined after April 24, 2020. A separate order will be entered on
13 each case setting new dates.
 - 14 a. In custody hearings will be held, with the exception of sentencings, via
15 video.
 - 16 b. All arraignments will be, based upon a finding of good cause as
17 outlined above, continued to April 30, 2020.
- 18 5. All civil trials scheduled between March 9 and April 24, 2020 will be
19 addressed on case by case basis.
 - 20 a. All impacted trials will be placed on the trial setting docket for Friday,
21 May 1, 2020 at 0900 a.m. to determine a new trial date, unless
22 previously reset with Court Administration.
 - 23 b. Stricken cases may be given priority over other, currently set civil
24 matters.
- 25 6. All civil hearings, including family law, child support, and dependency matters
26 are stricken except as noted below.
 - a. The court will continue to address emergent matters on a case by case
basis. *Court Call* may be used for emergency hearings.
 - i. Ex parte orders granted will be set for a hearing after April 24,
2020.
 - ii. Hearings stricken shall be rescheduled with Court
Administration.
 - iii. Longer continuances may be agreed to by the parties.
 - b. Shelter care hearings will continue to be held as scheduled.
 - i. Special requirements may be imposed dependent upon the
circumstances of each case.
 - c. Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) matters will continue to be held as
scheduled.
 - i. ITA matters will be held via video to the extent possible.
7. All final dissolution matters scheduled between March 9 and April 24, 2020
are hereby stricken.
 - a. Final dissolutions may be accomplished via written interrogatories.
Parties should consult with their attorneys or contact the court via
telephone to discuss the procedures.

- 1 8. For hearings that will occur, the court will limit attendance in the courtroom, to
2 be prioritized as follows:
3 a. Necessary court personnel (Judge, Clerk, Reporter, Security, and
4 Transport Officers);
5 b. Parties, including attorneys; and
6 c. The general public who wish to attend.
7 i. General public will be limited to a number varying on the
8 number of other participants and the courtroom in which the
9 hearing is held.
10 ii. Because courtroom vary in size, the number allowed will vary,
11 but will be consistent with the six (6) foot requirement to allow
12 sufficient room for social distancing.
13
14 9. All Juvenile offender matters with in-custody respondents shall be heard on
15 the 4th Floor of the Law and Justice Center.
16
17 10. All out of custody Juvenile offender matters are continued to April 28, 2020
18 unless previously rescheduled by Court Administration.
19
20 11. The continuances ordered herein best serves the ends of justice and protects
21 the rights of those impacted by the continuances, including defendants.
22
23 12. Consideration of the current health crisis and the safety of the community
24 outweighs the prejudice to any defendant or party impacted. Each case
25 impacted will, in addition to this order, be addressed on a case by case basis,
26 and may be subject to additional charges in the future.

The Lewis County Superior Court remains open, but in-person contact is limited.

- a. Such limitations may vary depending on staffing and other factors. People wishing to access the Superior Court are encouraged to call either the Superior Court or the Lewis County Superior Court Clerk.

DATED this 16 day of March 2020.



JUDGE JAMES W. LAWLER