

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

PIERCE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, STATE OF WASHINGTON

In Re

COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE  
EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED  
BY PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IN  
WASHINGTON STATE

GENERAL ORDER  
NO. 2020-07

WHEREAS On February 29, 2020, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency due to the public health emergency posed by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID – 19).

WHEREAS during this state of emergency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Washington State Department of Health have recommended increasingly stringent social distancing measures of at least six feet between people, and encouraged vulnerable individuals to avoid public spaces; and

WHEREAS consistent with these recommendations, Governor Inslee issued and extended a “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order directing non-essential businesses to close, banning public gatherings, and requiring Washingtonians to stay home except to pursue essential activities; and

1           WHEREAS our court facilities are ill-equipped at the present time to effectively  
2 comply with social distancing and other public health requirements and therefore  
3 continued in-person court appearances jeopardize the health and safety of litigants,  
4 attorneys, judges, court staff, and members of the public; and  
5

6           WHEREAS on March 16, 2020 this Court issued emergency General Orders  
7 2020-02 and 2020-03 based on the March 4, 2020 Order No. 25700-B-602 from Chief  
8 Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington State Supreme Court authorizing Presiding  
9 Judges to adopt, modify and suspend court rules and orders and to take further actions  
10 concerning court operations, as warranted to address the current public health  
11 emergency; and  
12

13           WHEREAS on March 19, 2020 Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington  
14 State Supreme Court adopted Corrected Order No. 25700-B-607, setting forth direction  
15 and authority to Presiding Judges of trial courts across the State to effectively  
16 administer their courts in response to this state of emergency, including the authority to  
17 adopt, modify, and suspend court rules and orders as warranted to address the  
18 emergency conditions; and  
19

20           WHEREAS in response to the Governor's order, the majority of court staff are  
21 working remotely from home, with only minimal staff on site; and  
22

23           WHEREAS Chief Justice Stephens on April 29, 2020 issued Second Revised  
24 and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations, No. 25700-B-618, suspending all jury  
25 trials until at least July 6, 2020 and continuing all non-emergency civil matters and all  
26 out of custody criminal matters until after June 1, 2020; now  
27  
28

