

FILED
IN COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

MAR 19 2020

PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON
KEVIN STOCK, County Clerk
BY KMA DEPUTY

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
COUNTY OF PIERCE

IN THE MATTER OF THE RESPONSE
BY THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
STATE OF WASHINGTON, COUNTY OF
PIERCE, TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH
EMERGENCY IN WASHINGTON STATE

Emergency Order: 20-07

EMERGENCY ORDER #7
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY
ORDER REGARDING OPERATIONS
AT PIERCE COUNTY JUVENILE
COURT

This matter comes before the Court again on the COVID-19 public health emergency in Washington State.

WHEREAS. On February 29, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency in all counties in the state of Washington due to the public health emergency caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19"); and

WHEREAS. On March 4, 2020 the Supreme Court of the State of Washington issued ORDER No. 25700-B-602 that the Presiding Judges of the Washington courts are authorized to adopt, modify, and suspend court rules and orders, and to take further actions concerning court operations, as warranted to address the current public health emergency; and

1 WHEREAS. On March 12, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee ordered all Washington
2 schools, public and private, and all Washington universities, public and private, closed
3 through April 24, 2020; and

4 WHEREAS. On March 16, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee ordered closure of all
5 Washington bars, restaurants, clubs, entertainment venues, faith-based organizations and
6 facilities, and other similar organizations and venues through March 31, 2020; and

7 WHEREAS. On March 16, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee ordered that gatherings in
8 the State of Washington are to be limited to no more than 50 people through March 31,
9 2020; and

10 WHEREAS. During this state of emergency, it may become necessary for courts to
11 close, relocate, or otherwise significantly modify their regular operations; and

12 WHEREAS. The Acting Presiding Judge in Pierce County has sufficient authority
13 to effectively administer the Superior Court in response to this state of emergency,
14 including authority to adopt, modify, and suspend court rules and orders as warranted to
15 address the emergency conditions.

16 NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the Superior Court's authority to administer
17 justice and to ensure the safety of court personnel, litigants, and the public,

18 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT between the dates of March 23, 2020 and April
19 24, 2020 at Pierce County Juvenile Court:

- 20 1. While the courtrooms will remain open, the only dependency matters that will
21 be heard are:

- 22 a. 72-hour Shelter Care hearings with telephonic appearances being
23 approved for all counsel, parents, and social workers. Any shelter care
24

1 order generated will be sent electronically by the Assistant Attorney
2 General to courtesy counsel for the parents for review and approval
3 before entry of the order with the Court. Neither original nor electronic
4 signatures by attorneys are needed if not available.

5 b. Emergency motions (immediately critical to child safety and health)
6 with telephonic appearances being approved for all participants. Agreed
7 orders can be submitted to the Court ex parte. Any orders generated
8 after a contested hearing will be circulated among all counsel for review
9 and approval before entry of the order with the Court. Neither original
10 nor electronic signatures by attorneys are needed if not available.

11 c. First-set fact-finding hearings, termination trials and guardianships with
12 telephonic appearances being approved for all participants. Agreed
13 orders can be submitted to the Court ex parte. If a default is to be taken
14 against a parent, the lobby will be called and, if no appearance, default
15 testimony can be presented. Contested matters will be set over to a date
16 after April 24, 2020.

17 d. Legally free docket shall be by telephonic appearance; and

18 e. At-Risk Youth and CHINS hearings shall be by telephonic appearance.

19 f. Adoptions which are adult, stepparent, or re-adopts will be postponed
20 until at least May 1, 2020. All other adoptions shall be done by written
21 testimony or by phone. Attorneys involved in adoption work should
22 contact Rebecca Via directly at (253) 798-7978 to work out procedures
23 for non-appearance.
24

- 1 2. The Court finds good cause for the suspension of all other dependency dockets
2 and the delays resulting from this suspension, and orders that all timelines for
3 the timely disposition of dependency cases are stayed during this period of
4 suspension.
- 5 3. All other dependency matters are suspended until after April 24, 2020. Any
6 dependency case currently set for any other type of hearing between March 23,
7 2020 and April 24, 2020 will be rescheduled for the same type of hearing five
8 weeks from the currently scheduled hearing date. If the fifth week falls on a
9 holiday, the matter will be set out for six weeks.
- 10 4. The Court finds that obtaining signatures from clients for orders continuing
11 existing matters places significant burdens on attorneys. Therefore, for all
12 matters covered in Section 3, this Order serves to continue those matters and
13 orders of continuance will be prepared for the Court to sign. Additionally:
- 14 a. Attorneys are not required to obtain signatures from their clients on
15 orders to continue dependency matters through April 24, 2020.
- 16 b. Neither original nor electronic signatures by attorneys are needed if
17 not available.
- 18 c. Attorneys are directed to provide notice to their clients of new court
19 dates.

20 DATED at Tacoma, Washington this 19 day of March, 2020.

21
22
23 _____
24 Honorable Philip K. Sorensen
 Acting Presiding Judge
 Pierce County Superior Court

FILED
IN COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE
MAR 19 2020
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON
KEVIN STOCK, County Clerk
BY KMA DEPUTY