



Chambers of
ERICK L. LARSH
PRESIDING JUDGE

Superior Court of California County of Orange

700 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE WEST
SANTA ANA, CA 92701

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 21/04

Limiting In-Person Access to Court Properties

This Order temporarily limits in-person access to Court properties to ensure the safe and orderly administration of justice and to protect the health of those who participate in the justice system in light of the COVID-19 surge currently impacting Orange County.

The World Health Organization, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the State of California, and the County of Orange have recognized that the world, country, state, and county face a life-threatening pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. The number of positive COVID-19 cases in Orange County is increasing at an alarming rate, forcing the county to return to the most restrictive tier of the state's Blueprint for a Safer Economy and to be subject to a Regional Limited Stay Home Order. The Orange County Superior Court has seen an increase in the number of positive COVID-19 tests among court employees and justice partners. The CDC, the California Department of Public Health, and the Orange County Health Care Agency have recommended that individuals stay home except for essential services, but if it is necessary to leave the house, to avoid crowds and observe stringent social distancing measures of at least six feet between people to mitigate the spread of the virus.

On January 19, 2021, the Orange County Healthcare Agency reported 3,995 COVID-19 positive cases, with 214,808 cumulative cases in the county since tracking began. The adjusted daily case rate of COVID-19 positive cases was reported as 67.1 per 100,000 based on a seven-day average with a seven-day lag. The testing positivity rate was reported as 16.7%.

Pursuant to my authority to control matters before the Court (Code Civ. Proc., § 128; Gov. Code, § 68070); my authority as Presiding Judge (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 10.603); the inherent powers of the Court (*In re Reno* (2012) 565 Cal.4th 428, 522); and in compliance with state and local guidelines and ordinances, in order to limit and manage the transmission of COVID-19 in the court system, I therefore order the following:

In person access to courthouses is restricted at all times to judicial officers, court staff, attorneys, Orange County Sheriff's Department personnel, mediators, litigants, and witnesses with matters on calendar, jurors and potential jurors who have been subpoenaed to appear, justice partners with matters on calendar or offices at a courthouse, third party vendors who have been requested to provide assistance to the Court, or any person provided access by the Presiding Judge for official court business. Remote access, including public access, will be granted to proceedings as detailed on the [Court's COVID-19 website](#).

Members of the public should not visit a courthouse unless they have a scheduled in person hearing, trial, or an appointment to enter the building. Social distancing rules will continue to be strictly enforced in all court facilities. The number of individuals entering public courtrooms and elevators will be subject to space limitations. Persons entering a courthouse are required to maintain social distancing and wear face masks covering their nose and mouth as detailed in Second Amended Administrative Order No. [20/16](#). Persons displaying possible coronavirus symptoms will not be allowed in Court facilities.

Individuals should go to the [Court's COVID-19 website](#) or call the court's automated phone service at 657-622-5800 to obtain the most current information about on court cases, traffic matters, appeals, remote access, processing payments, getting records, and obtaining self-help assistance.

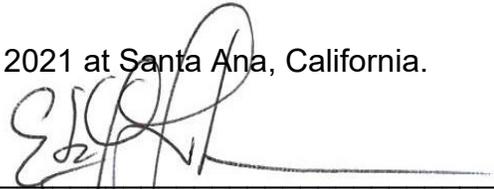
To enforce social distancing, each court department shall schedule only the number of matters during each session as it can accommodate consistent with social distancing requirements in courtrooms and outside hallways of the courthouse.

Sheriff's Department personnel are directed to enforce this Order and Court's previous Administrative Orders requiring members of the public entering the Court to comply with pandemic-related restrictions.

This Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until rescinded or superseded by another order.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 22nd day of January 2021 at Santa Ana, California.

January 22, 2021
Date



Erick L. Larsh
Presiding Judge