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FILED  
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT  
1/6/2022  
BY Hinojosa, Ana  
DEPUTY

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF KERN

**IN RE: CHANGES TO COURT  
PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES  
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

MISCELLANEOUS NO.: STO-22-0001

THE COURT HEREBY FINDS AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

On March 4, 2020, the State of California entered a State of Emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19. On March 19, 2020, the Governor of California issued an order directing all Californians to shelter in place at their place of residence except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of the federal critical infrastructure sectors to protect public health and ensure the healthcare delivery system is capable of serving all and prioritizing those at the highest risk and vulnerability.

On June 15, 2021, the Governor announced that restrictions that had been in place for the last year were eliminated, including physical distancing, capacity limits, county tier systems, and face masks in most settings for fully vaccinated individuals.

1 See Executive Orders [N-07-21](#) and [N-08-21](#).

2 On January 5, 2022 the California Department of Public Health (CDPH)  
3 extended the requirement for universal masking indoors statewide, regardless of  
4 vaccination status, due to the emergence of the more contagious Omicron variant.  
5 See [CDPH's Guidance for Use of Face Coverings](#), issued on January 5, 2022.

6 [Emergency Local Rule No. 2](#) has now been amended to require face masks for  
7 all individuals, regardless of vaccination status. Individual judicial officers reserve the  
8 authority to modify any part of this rule inside their individual courtroom.

9 Local health care providers have noted that within the last week, they have  
10 observed that Omicron, a more contagious variant of COVID-19, has arrived in Kern  
11 County. In a January 4, 2022 report to the Kern County Board of Supervisors, Kern  
12 County Public Health Director Brynn Carrigan says there are 10 Omicron COVID  
13 variant cases in Kern County. Kern County Public Health also reported that the current  
14 case rate is 15.2%. Public Health Director Carrigan reported that based upon the  
15 state's coronavirus model, a surge in cases is expected to peak in March 2022. See  
16 [News release from Kern County Public Health Services Department](#). According to the  
17 Kern County Public Health Services Department's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#), the Omicron  
18 variant rate has since gone up.

19 Based upon the Court's strong desire to remain open for court proceedings and  
20 to protect litigants, attorneys, justice partners, its staff and the public, THE COURT  
21 HEREBY FINDS AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

- 22 A. In-person access to all Kern County Superior Courthouses will only be  
23 permitted for: parties, attorneys, legal staff members, an objecting party or  
24 relative of a minor, conservatee or decedent in a probate case, summoned  
25 jurors, subpoenaed witnesses, employees and other courthouse occupants, law

1 enforcement, individuals seeking assistance from the District Attorney's Office,  
2 one (1) support person pursuant to Family Code § 6303, approved vendors,  
3 contractors and deliveries, media, and individuals who have been permitted by  
4 Court order. Access to all courthouse facilities will also be permitted for  
5 members/employees/associates/volunteers of the American Civil Liberties  
6 Union of Southern California's Courtwatch Kern program. Entrance to a  
7 particular courthouse facility by the aforementioned should be limited to one (1)  
8 or two (2) individuals at a time for the purpose of monitoring courtroom activity.

9 B. To ensure that members of the public may still observe proceedings in this  
10 facility, and to encourage members of the public to shelter in place away from  
11 public spaces like courthouses, all non-confidential proceedings in all Kern  
12 County Superior Courthouses will be made available via audio live streaming.  
13 Consult the Court's website for live streaming links to the various courtrooms.

14 C. However, each judge retains the discretion and authority to refuse, limit or  
15 terminate such broadcasts, in whole or in part, pursuant to the factors and  
16 prohibitions articulated in California Rules of Court, rule 1.150, and in  
17 consideration of other statutory and constitutional provisions. Each judge retains  
18 the discretion and authority to refuse, limit or terminate audio live streaming, for  
19 portions of proceedings, pursuant to the factors and prohibitions articulated in  
20 California Rules of Court, rule 1.150 and in consideration of other statutory and  
21 constitutional provisions.

22 D. The livestreamed court proceedings may not be photographed, recorded (audio  
23 or video), or re-broadcast by anyone without prior written judicial authorization  
24 consistent with California Rules of Court, rule 1.150, and Kern County Superior  
25 Court Standing Order 19-0005.

1 E. This order does not restrict or otherwise abrogate the express and inherent  
2 authority of the court and its judges to provide for the orderly conduct of  
3 proceedings.

4 F. With the exception of civil jury trials, all Limited and Unlimited Civil proceedings  
5 shall be conducted via CourtCall, Zoom, or in person at the discretion of the  
6 individual judicial officer.

7 CourtCall can be reached at 1-888-882-6878. Instructions for accessing each  
8 Courtroom's Zoom account can be found on the Court's website. The Court  
9 may find good cause for any other exemptions from this Order.

10 G. All Family Law (Non-DCSS) and Probate Division proceedings shall be  
11 conducted via remote technology or in person, at the discretion of the individual  
12 judicial officer. The Court may find good cause for any other exemptions from  
13 this Order.

14 H. All Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) matters will be held  
15 telephonically as set forth in Standing Order 20-0019, issued December 8,  
16 2020, available [here](#).

17 I. For all other matters, the Court encourages attorneys to use our current remote  
18 appearance options during this time.

19 J. All of the Court's criminal calendars may be viewed at:


20 [https://itsapps.kerncounty.com/iframe/nonCMS/crimindex/crim\\_index\\_case\\_inf](https://itsapps.kerncounty.com/iframe/nonCMS/crimindex/crim_index_case_info_cal.asp)  
21 [o\\_cal.asp](https://itsapps.kerncounty.com/iframe/nonCMS/crimindex/crim_index_case_info_cal.asp). All of the Court's civil calendars may be viewed at:

22 <https://odyprodportal.kern.courts.ca.gov/portalprod>

23 This order supersedes the Court's prior standing order, *Reopening Access to*  
24 *Court Proceedings During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Amended)*, Misc. No. STO-21-  
25 0010, issued on September 21, 2021.

1           THIS ORDER IS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 10, 2022 AND MAY BE AMENDED  
2 AS CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE.

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4 Dated: January 6, 2022.

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8 Colette Humphrey, Presiding Judge  
9 Kern County Superior Court  
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