



# Superior Court of California County of Napa

## Judges

Mark Boessenecker  
Cynthia P. Smith  
Elia Ortiz  
Victoria Wood  
Monique Langhorne  
Scott R. L. Young  
Joseph J. Solga

## Commissioner

Myrlis  
Stockdale Coleman

## Court Executive Officer

Robert E. Fleshman

April 30, 2020

To Our Napa County Bar Members:

First, we hope you and your loved ones are well and staying safe in these difficult times.

We are now in our sixth week of emergency operations at the Napa Superior Court. Since mid-March we have been handling only emergency and time sensitive matters (criminal, juvenile dependency and delinquency, and emergency ex partes). All other matters have been continued two to three months. The Judicial Council and the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court have issued a number of emergency orders to assist the courts in managing caseloads during this crisis.

This past week, Napa County re-issued its shelter-at-home order. This new order has no end date. The county also issued strong recommendations that people wear face coverings when out in public. Governor Newsom recently outlined the six indicators of what will need to happen before California can begin to modify the current shelter-at-home orders. It is evident that the State of Emergency is not going to be lifted anytime soon.

Thus, we have petitioned for and received from the Chief Justice authorization to extend the emergency orders as provided in Government Code section 68115. The extension has been granted through Friday, May 29, 2020.

Notwithstanding our request to extend these orders, we have started the process of restoring court operations. For example, we are now processing all ex parte applications, with the caveat that applications unrelated to child custody and/or prevention of violence or harassment must include a sufficient explanation of why the matter requires urgent decision or setting (please refer to the calendaring guidelines [www.napa.courts.ca.gov](http://www.napa.courts.ca.gov) for more details). Also, we are working on enhancing our electronic signing/processing capabilities such that we should soon be able to process some non-emergency civil, probate, and family law filings, focused initially on stipulations for orders and judgments, and then expanding from there. Further, our success in utilizing video conferencing in criminal arraignments and some juvenile matters has encouraged us to prepare to expand its use to other types of matters, likely to start with less formal settings, such as civil and family law settlement conferences, and to then expand from there.

As you know, once it becomes safe for our community to lift the shelter-at-home orders, it will be done in phases. Reopening our Napa courthouses may also need to be done in phases. It will likely be many months before we can run the Courthouses as we did prior to the pandemic.

## Telephone

(707) 299-1100

## Historic Courthouse

825 Brown Street  
Napa, CA 94559-3031  
FAX: (707) 299-1250

## Criminal Courthouse

1111 Third Street  
Napa, CA 94559-3001  
FAX: (707) 253-4673

## Juvenile Courthouse

2350 Old Sonoma Road  
Napa, CA 94559-3703  
(site address only –  
no mail delivery)

To Our Napa County Bar Members

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Until then, we will take measures to protect the health of our staff, litigants, attorneys, and the community.

When will we more fully reopen? Our current target date is Monday, June 1, 2020. Whether this will be a full or a partial reopening remains to be seen. We are also working on possibly reopening some civil courtrooms earlier, likely requiring remote appearances, either through telephone or videoconference.

What will it look like? We will follow the advice of the public health experts. Thus, we may require that people wear face coverings and observe social distancing while in the courthouses. Social distancing also means that we will have to limit the number of people in a courtroom or the courthouse at any time. Where possible, we may require parties to appear by either CourtCall or a video conferencing platform.

We may stagger the number of people who can be in a courtroom or a courthouse at one time. You may be required to wait outside the courtroom or a courthouse until your case is ready to be heard. We may need to take people's temperatures before allowing them into the courthouses. Figuring out how to accomplish this will be quite a challenge.

In the meantime, we look to continue to find ways to safely expand operations. We know that the partial closure has been a hardship for all, regardless of area of legal practice. We also know that there is much hesitation over the prospect of returning to work in a crowded courthouse with a potentially lethal virus still not in check. Thus, expansion of court operations requires careful planning and preparation.

We are grateful for the kindness and good will we have experienced from the Napa legal community over the course of this crisis. Your understanding and patience is very much appreciated. Please know that we at the Napa Superior Court are committed to restoring full court operations as soon as it is safe and responsible to do so.

In the meantime, we wish all of you and your families good health. Stay safe.

Kind regards,



Mark Boessenecker  
Presiding Judge



Cynthia P. Smith  
Assistant Presiding