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

**TWENTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ORDER RE: MADERA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
MITIGATION OF THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a proclamation that a state of emergency exists in California as a result of the threat and continuing spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in this state.

On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a “shelter in place” order directing all residents immediately to heed current State public health directives to stay home, except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors and additional sectors as the State Public Health Officer may designate as critical to protect health and well-being of all Californians.

On August 28, 2020, the governor announced a four-tier blueprint for reopening the California economy. Since the blueprint was introduced, Madera County has remained in the purple, or most restricted, tier. Our county’s risk level is classified as “widespread.”

On December 3, 2020, in response to the surge in statewide COVID-19 cases, Governor Newsom announced a regional stay-at-home order in regions with less than 15 percent intensive care unit (ICU) bed capacity. Madera County is in the San Joaquin Valley region.

As of December 4, 2020, the regional stay-at-home order was triggered in the San Joaquin Valley region.

1 On January 25, 2021, the regional stay-at-home order was lifted in the San Joaquin Valley
2 region. At that time, the four-week ICU capacity projection for the San Joaquin Valley region was
3 above 15 percent, the threshold for regions to exit the order.

4 With the lifting of the regional stay-at-home order, Madera County returned to the
5 provisions of the four-tier blueprint for reopening the California economy. Madera County
6 remains in the purple, or the most restricted/widespread, tier.

7 Courthouses are places of high risk during the pandemic; however, case rates and
8 positivity rates are improving in Madera County.

9 Although COVID-19 continues to present risks to all persons who enter the Madera
10 County courthouse, including jurors and potential jurors, attorneys, litigants, criminal defendants
11 and court personnel, the Madera County Superior Court continues to adhere to preventative
12 measures that mitigate the risk of COVID transmission, including: mandatory use of masks/face
13 coverings, symptom screening upon entry, social distancing efforts, facility disinfection and
14 fostering an environment that encourages hand washing/sanitizing. These measures are also
15 shown to protect members of groups in specific high-risk categories, such as individuals with
16 preexisting health conditions, persons with compromised immune systems (whether known or
17 unknown) and persons of advanced age.

18 Considering the improved COVID-19 metrics, and the responsibility of upholding the
19 constitutional right of due process, this court will resume operations in a safe manner.

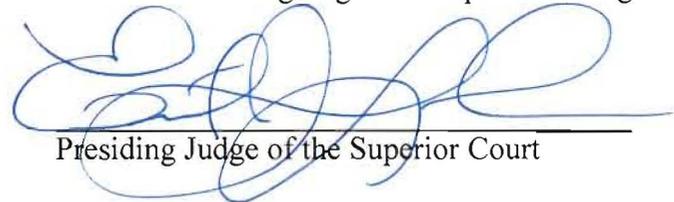
20 Accordingly, I hereby issue the following general orders, **effective February 16, 2021 and**
21 **continuing indefinitely until further notice:**

- 22 1. No personal in-court appearances will be permitted in any civil, family law or family
23 support proceeding. All such proceedings may be conducted remotely by use of CourtCall
24 or the Zoom video conference platform. Exceptions to this order apply to civil
25 trials/evidentiary hearings, all emergency probate matters and emergency cases involving
26 the issuance of restraining orders or protective orders, as well as all statutorily mandated
27 hearings.
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2. All criminal proceedings in which the time for commencement of trial, provided for in Penal Code section 1382, has not been waived may be continued for good cause, as determined by the judicial officer, and/or as authorized by any continuation order of the Chief Justice.
3. All criminal hearings, including arraignments, shall be by Zoom video conferencing or other method of video conferencing approved by the court. No in-custody defendant is to be transported to the courthouse from CDCR or Madera County DOC unless transport is ordered by the court.
4. Drug Court and Batterer's Treatment reviews set through the week of February 22, 2021 will be continued and scheduled for a future date. Notifications containing the future date are forthcoming.
5. All mediation services and investigative interviews to be provided by Family Court Services shall be conducted telephonically unless in-person mediation or interview is specifically ordered by the court. Pursuant to provisions of section 1851(a)(1) of the Probate Code, the court investigator may conduct conservatorship investigations as required by sections 1850 and 1851 of the Probate Code by means of a video interview of the conservatee, in lieu of visiting the conservatee. This order is necessary for the health and safety of the investigator, the conservatee, the caregivers, and the public, and to prevent harm to the conservatee.
6. The self-help office will resume in-person appointments. Use of remote technology is authorized as an alternative to in-person appointments.
7. Notwithstanding Madera County Superior Court, Local Rule 2.4.6, all applications for ex parte relief shall be submitted to the court before notice of hearing is provided to the opposing party. A judicial officer will review the application and a judicial assistant will notify the applicant if notice to the opposing party and a court appearance is required. If a hearing date is ordered by the judicial officer, the person applying for ex parte relief must notify the opposing party no later than 10:00 a.m. the court day before the hearing date ordered, unless the judicial officer finds good cause to dispense with such notice.
8. All oral arguments in the appellate department may be conducted remotely via CourtCall or the Zoom video conference platform.
9. Each judicial officer retains discretion to deviate from the foregoing orders upon a finding of good cause.

DATED: February 11, 2021



Presiding Judge of the Superior Court