

EMERGENCY/TEMPORARY PROCEDURES FOR CIVIL COMMISSIONER COURTROOMS AT THE COUNTY CITY BUILDING effective MARCH 18, 2020; as amended effective July 13, 2020.

Superior Court hours and dockets are daily subject to change. Please check the Superior Court website for the latest updates. <https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/122/Superior-Court>

Until further notice the following temporary procedures will be in place for each of the civil commissioner courtrooms at the County-City Building:

GENERAL

- With certain exceptions, the Commissioners use Zoom as the platform for remote hearings. When the use of Zoom is not technologically feasible for a litigant, alternative technology shall be used, such as CourtCall or courtroom telephone.
- Zoom may be used as audio only without video if: a) a party or witness does not have video capability; or b) the Commissioner articulates a specific reason on the record based on the facts or issues in the case that justifies not using video.
- This does not alter, or impact, a Commissioner's discretion to conduct hearings based on file review with no oral argument.
- CourtCall has waived fees for self-represented parties, and has reduced fees for Qualified Legal Service Providers, and attorneys. Court Call 1 (888) 882-6878
- All parties and attorneys shall obtain a LINX account via the Superior Court Clerk's Office. LINX account fees are currently waived for self-represented parties. <https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/90890/Linx-Account-SelfRepresented-Fillable?bidId=>
- If you do not have access to a fax or scanner, there are apps which allow you to scan from your cell phone.
<https://www.imore.com/how-use-document-scanner-iphone-and-ipad>
<https://www.androidauthority.com/best-document-scanner-apps-777240/>

Show Cause/Family Law Motions AM docket in all Commissioners' Courtrooms

- Pursuant to the Pierce County Local Court Rules all hearings must be confirmed by noon two (2) court days before a hearing. To confirm a hearing call 253-798-6697, press option 1 or strike your motion in LINX (unless the hearing is for adequate cause).
- Hearing Information Form T shall still be submitted as required by PCLSPR 94.04 (a) (4). <https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/82768/Local-Rules---effective-September-1-2019?bidId=>
- All hearings will be conducted by remote video conferencing using Zoom. The court will serve as host and send an email invite to the parties (all parties should make sure the court file includes the party's email address and telephone number). The Zoom hearing will be streamed live by YouTube, unless the Commissioner determines otherwise.

- For any motion scheduled by a lawyer, the lawyer shall prepare orders consistent with the Commissioner's rulings and submit the orders to the Commissioner's clerk electronically before the end of that docket.
- For self-represented parties, proposed orders shall be submitted, as a Word Document, to Commissioner Services via email or fax no later than 1 court day prior to the scheduled hearing. SUPCSD@piercecounitywa.gov. FAX 253-798-6897
If no orders are delivered, the Commissioner may continue the hearing or may make a ruling and prepare appropriate orders.
- If there are deficiencies in the record, such as no proof of service, defective service, or a motion lacking a supporting declaration, the Commissioner may decide not to take oral argument. In that case, the Commissioner will complete and file a deficiency order.
- All requests for continuances shall be in writing, accompanied by a proposed order and emailed or faxed to Commissioner Services. SUPCSD@piercecounitywa.gov FAX 253-798-6897

Uncontested Self-Represented Dissolution AM docket

- No personal appearances. All hearings shall be conducted using Interrogatories instead of testimony.
<https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/90544/Interrogatories-with-Declaration>
- Proposed orders shall be submitted to Commissioner Services, via email or fax, prior to the day of hearing. SUPCSD@piercecounitywa.gov FAX 253-798-6897
Link to court forms: <http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms/>
- If, after review, the Commissioner finds that the court file or the proposed orders are deficient, a written deficiency order will be prepared and filed by the Commissioner.

Civil Division A – Courtroom 100

Probate/Guardianship/Unlawful Detainer/Vulnerable Adult/Minor Settlement PM Docket

- For any motion noted by an attorney, proposed orders shall be delivered via email to Commissioner Services or attached to the Hearing Information Form U no later than 1 court day prior to the scheduled hearing. All orders shall be submitted as a Word document.
- Hearing Information Form U shall still be submitted as required by local court rule.
- All hearings will be conducted by remote video conferencing using Zoom. The court will serve as host and send an email invite to the parties (all parties should make sure the court file includes the party's email address and telephone number). The Zoom hearing will be streamed live by YouTube, unless the Commissioner determines otherwise.
- For self-represented parties, proposed orders may be submitted, as a Word Document, to Commissioner Services via email or fax no later than 1 court day prior to the scheduled hearing. SUPCSD@piercecounitywa.gov. FAX 253-798-6897

If no orders are delivered, the Commissioner may continue the hearing or may still make a ruling and prepare appropriate orders or direct that the parties/attorneys prepare orders.

- If there are deficiencies in the record, such as no proof of service, defective service, or a motion lacking a supporting declaration, the Commissioner may decide not to take oral argument. In that case, the Commissioner will complete and file a deficiency order.
- All requests for continuances shall be in writing, accompanied by a proposed order and emailed or faxed to Commissioner Services. SUPCSD@piercecounywa.gov FAX 253-798-6897.
- Minor Settlements: Attendance of minor, parents, Settlement Guardian ad Litem and petitioning attorney are waived if agreed signed orders are emailed to Commissioner Services 1 court day prior to the scheduled hearing. SUPCSD@piercecounywa.gov If matter is contested, all parties shall appear as noted above via Zoom.
- Unlawful Detainers: All such cases, with limited exceptions, have been suspended by order of the Governor.
- Vulnerable Adult Protection Orders: No personal appearances. All Petitioners, Respondents, the vulnerable adult, or their counsel, shall appear remotely by Zoom.
- Guardianships: No personal appearances. All Petitioners, Alleged Incapacitated Persons, Guardians ad Litem, other interested parties, or their counsel, shall appear by Zoom.

Civil Division B – Courtroom 117

Domestic Violence AM/PM dockets

- No personal appearances. All hearings shall be conducted by telephone or videoconference, including Zoom and CourtCall. If by Zoom, the court will serve as host and send an invite to the parties (all parties should make sure the court file includes the party's email address and telephone number). If by CourtCall, the party makes the arrangements to appear by calling CourtCall, at least two days in advance. CourtCall 1 (888) 882-6878.
- No live streaming of any hearings will occur.

Civil Division C – Courtroom 407

Prosecutor's Family Support/Contempt PM Docket

All hearings will be conducted by remote video conferencing using Zoom. The court will serve as host and send an email invite to the parties (all parties should make sure the court file includes the party's email address and telephone number). The Zoom hearing will be streamed live by YouTube, unless the Commissioner determines otherwise (all parties should make sure the court file includes the party's email address and telephone number).

Civil Division D – Courtroom 105

Screening of Domestic Violence/Unlawful Harassment/Vulnerable Adult Protection Order and Sexual Assault Protection Order Petitions

The Clerk's Office, located in Room 110 of the County City Building (930 Tacoma Avenue South), is open for petitioners to request initial orders from 8:30 am until 4:00 pm Monday through Friday. Parties may also call the Superior Court Clerk's Office (253-798-8827) if they are is not able to come into the County City Building. For intimate partner relationships, (spouses, former spouses, persons who have a child in common or persons who have or did have a dating relationship), a petitioners can call the Family Justice Center at (253) 798-4166 or the YWCA at (253) 383-2593 or at the Clerk's Office. Petitioners in a non-intimate partner relationship should file/complete the petition at the Clerk' Office.

Once the paperwork is complete, the Domestic Violence Screening Commissioner in courtroom 105 will conduct the ex parte hearing.

- Open remote kiosk locations may still be used to complete petitions-
- Petitioner must provide valid mailing address and/or email address prior to petition being submitted. The mailing address and email address shall be kept confidential unless the petitioner consents to its release.
- No signature shall be required if the petition is completed telephonically. The completed petition will be delivered to the Commissioner or Judge (for extreme risk and sexual assault petitions) for screening. Current screening procedures will remain in place.
- Copies of the petition, notice of hearing, additional statements, and any temporary order for protection ("initial pleadings") shall be electronically transmitted to the petitioner for service. If that is not possible, court or clerk staff shall mail two copies of the initial pleadings to the petitioner.
- Service of the initial pleadings on the respondent may be done by personal service. -or mail. Service by mail is authorized for all civil protection orders without requiring 2 attempts at personal service or other evidence of due diligence. Permission to serve by publication shall still require a court order before proceeding. A completed proof of service form shall be timely electronically filed by the petitioner.
- All self-represented parties shall be enrolled in the Clerk's full LINX access subscription (information to be provided by Clerk when Petition is completed).
- All self-represented parties and any attorney representing a party shall arrange in advance to participate in the full hearing via Court Call. Court Call 1 (888) 882-6878
- Either party may still seek a civil standby order prior to the hearing but shall follow the procedures above.
- No live streaming of any hearings will occur.

Ex Parte Mail

- All agreed or unopposed presentations or motions presented by attorneys shall be submitted via e-filing pursuant to the current ex parte mail policy, including those

matters previously requiring a personal appearance (such as probates, orders to show cause, finalization of family law cases, temporary family law orders). Should JIS background checks be required, the lawyer must provide the date of birth of all adults named as litigants and all adult household members. Verifications of the parties per local court rule shall be provided if a dissolution, legal separation or invalidity is being finalized.

- If a hearing is requested, schedule the hearing in LINX before submitting orders.
- No contested ex parte restraining orders or contested matters shall be submitted by mail.
- Electronically sign all orders before submitting.
- Submit original wills to the Superior Court Clerk's Office if probate of a will is being sought, however requests to open probates may be submitted via e-filing ex parte mail.
- The mandatory ex parte mail fee, imposed by the clerk pursuant to county ordinance, is waived for all submissions. All other provisions of the current policy remain in effect.
- There may be a delay in processing mail due to the increased volume of mail, JIS being run and the review required.

Ex Parte Division – Courtroom 129

- No personal appearance. All participation via telephone or videoconference using Zoom.
- Ex Parte hears contested, emergency matters only.
- In order to request a contested emergency hearing, please contact Commissioner Services Department (CSD), file all pleadings in LINX, email or fax proposed orders to CSD. SUPCSD@piercecounitywa.gov FAX 253-798-6897
- Provide contact information for both parties including telephone numbers and email addresses.
- The Court Commissioner will determine whether notice to the other party is required.
- If notice is required, it should be no less than 24 hours in advance.
- CSD will schedule the ex parte return hearing.
- Any signed restraining orders will be emailed to all parties.
- Personal service is still required, email or text message notice of the ex parte hearing is not considered personal service.
- All agreed or unopposed presentations or motions presented by attorneys shall be submitted via e-filing pursuant to the current ex parte mail policy, including those matters currently requiring a personal appearance. Should JIS background checks be required, the lawyer must provide the date of birth of all adults named as litigants and all adult household members.
- Ex Parte courtroom hours remain unchanged.

Western State Hospital

- Changes to current procedures have been developed by the Hospital administrators, the Attorney General's office, Department of Assigned Counsel, Prosecuting Attorney's office, and Court/Clerk representatives. Please call the Court Clerk at Western State Hospital (253-756-2878) for current updates on changes to procedures.
- All persons entering the courtroom at Western State Hospital shall be screened in accordance with Hospital policy.
- All medical and nursing student observations in the courtroom are suspended.