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PIERCE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, STATE OF WASHINGTON

In Re

COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE
EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED
BY PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IN
WASHINGTON STATE

GENERAL ORDER
NO. 2020-07

WHEREAS On February 29, 2020, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency due to the public health emergency posed by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID – 19).

WHEREAS during this state of emergency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Washington State Department of Health have recommended increasingly stringent social distancing measures of at least six feet between people, and encouraged vulnerable individuals to avoid public spaces; and

WHEREAS consistent with these recommendations, Governor Inslee issued and extended a “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order directing non-essential businesses to close, banning public gatherings, and requiring Washingtonians to stay home except to pursue essential activities; and

1 WHEREAS our court facilities are ill-equipped at the present time to effectively
2 comply with social distancing and other public health requirements and therefore
3 continued in-person court appearances jeopardize the health and safety of litigants,
4 attorneys, judges, court staff, and members of the public; and
5

6 WHEREAS on March 16, 2020 this Court issued emergency General Orders
7 2020-02 and 2020-03 based on the March 4, 2020 Order No. 25700-B-602 from Chief
8 Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington State Supreme Court authorizing Presiding
9 Judges to adopt, modify and suspend court rules and orders and to take further actions
10 concerning court operations, as warranted to address the current public health
11 emergency; and
12

13 WHEREAS on March 19, 2020 Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington
14 State Supreme Court adopted Corrected Order No. 25700-B-607, setting forth direction
15 and authority to Presiding Judges of trial courts across the State to effectively
16 administer their courts in response to this state of emergency, including the authority to
17 adopt, modify, and suspend court rules and orders as warranted to address the
18 emergency conditions; and
19

20 WHEREAS in response to the Governor's order, the majority of court staff are
21 working remotely from home, with only minimal staff on site; and
22

23 WHEREAS Chief Justice Stephens on April 29, 2020 issued Second Revised
24 and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations, No. 25700-B-618, suspending all jury
25 trials until at least July 6, 2020 and continuing all non-emergency civil matters and all
26 out of custody criminal matters until after June 1, 2020; now
27
28

