IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
IN AND FOR WHITMAN COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF	)	
	)	NO. 031720
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO PUBLIC	)	
HEALTH THREAT	)	EMERGENCY
(Coronavirus –COVID-19)	)	ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
	)	
	)	

THIS MATTER comes before the Court on the public health emergency in Washington State and Whitman County:

WHEREAS, On February 29, 2020, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee signed a proclamation declaring a State of Emergency exists in all counties in the State of Washington due to the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the state and directed that the plans and procedures of the Washington State comprehensive Emergency Management Plan be implemented; and

WHEREAS, on March 4th, 2020 Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington Supreme Court adopted Order No. 25700-B-602 granting emergency authority to the Presiding Judges of Washington courts to adopt, modify and/or suspend court rules and orders, and to take further actions concerning court operations as warranted to address the current public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency for the United States due to the COVID-19 health threat; and

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2020 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provided guidance that large events and gatherings be cancelled or postponed for eight (8) weeks; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020 the Governor imposed additional restrictions prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 people and shut down restaurants, bars, and entertainment and recreational facilities within the State of Washington due to the danger of continued spread of the virus and the increasing danger the virus presents to the health care system in the region, as well as directing all public and private schools within the State of Washington be closed from March 17th through April 24, 2020; and

WHEREAS, this Administrative Order is being issued in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Washington State, which is the location of the first reported domestic case of the disease and some of the first significant community impacts from school and business closures. Given the number of identified and projected cases of COVID-19 in Washington State and the severity of risk posed to the public, and given the above public health recommendations; and

WHEREAS, conducting regular court hearings with large groups of persons in the courtroom results in exposure to large groups of people which is contrary to the recommendations of health authorities and contrary to the Governor's proclamations under the current state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Court seeks to limit the number of in person hearings/contacts during the health emergency;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that EFFECTIVE IMMDIATELY and UNTIL FURTHER ORDER OF THE COURT:

Relating to COURT ADMINISTRATION:

1. The Court's clerk window at both the Colfax and the Pullman locations will be closed to the public. Payments will continue to be accepted by mail, over the phone and via the drop box located outside the court facilities. The fee for credit card payments is reduced to $5.00 per transaction through May 31, 2020.
2. The court staff will maintain regular hours of operation unless otherwise amended by further order and notice to the Administrative Office of the Courts.
3. The Judge will be available, at the court's discretion, for essential hearings, video and telephone appearances, infraction hearings via mail/email/FAX, emergency motions and agreed orders.
4. All filings will be accepted via mail, email, fax or by placing in the Court drop box.

Whitman County Courthouse
PO Box 230
Colfax WA 99111
Phone: (509)397-6260
FAX: (509)397-5584

Pullman City Hall
325 SE Paradise St
Pullman WA 99163
Phone: (509)332-2065
FAX: (509)338-3318

Email: Please see District Court page at Whitmancounty.org

Drop box locations:
Colfax – Clerk's office counter – opening under window
Pullman –located on the NW corner of Paradise & Kamiaken Streets – marked Pullman City Hall

Relating to CRIMINAL MATTERS:

1. CrRLJ 4.1(a)(2) regarding "speedy arraignment" is hereby suspended until further order of this Court.
2. CrRLJ 3.3(e)(8): All continuances granted and matters ordered rescheduled by the Court while this order is in effect shall be "excluded periods" for the purpose of calculating time for trial.

3. The Court will continue to hold preliminary hearings for in-custody matters, domestic violence and driving while under the influence/physical control offenses.
4. Effective immediately, the Court will continue or reschedule all other criminal matters, including jury trials, until after May 8, 2020. The clerk will notify the parties of the new court date. Defendants will be sent notice via U.S. mail. Defendants may contact the Court to update a mailing address.
5. The Court will hear in-custody cases via video if available.
6. A defendant may contact the Court by telephone, email or mail to request a bench warrant quash. The request will be heard ex parte by the Court. The defendant shall provide a current mailing address.
7. Bench warrants issued prior to today's date will remain active until served, recalled or quashed.
8. All persons ordered to check-in with probation shall do so via telephone or email to the probation department.

Whitman County Probation
PO Box 230
Colfax WA 99111

Phone: (509)397-6265
FAX: (509)397- 5594

Email: Please see the Whitman County Probation page at whitmancounty.org

Relating to CIVIL PROTECTION ORDERS:

1. Individuals may request petitions for protection forms via mail, email or FAX. Forms may also be downloaded at courts.wa.gov.
2. Petitions may be delivered to the court via mail, email, FAX or drop box as listed on page 2.
3. Full order hearings, motions to modify/terminate, and any other necessary hearing will be held telephonically or via video-conferencing.
4. Decisions and orders will be mailed or emailed by the clerk.

Relating to CIVIL INFRACTION MATTERS:

1. Operation of IRLJ 2.6(a), (b), (d), (e) and (f) is hereby suspended until further Order of the Court.
2. Effective immediately, all civil infraction matters will be continued until after May 8, 2020. The clerk of the Court will send written notice to all parties. Parties will have the option to conduct the hearing by mail, email or FAX.
3. Effective immediately, all new requests for in-person mitigation or contested hearings shall be scheduled after June 1, 2020.
4. All infraction litigants regardless of location may elect a mitigation or contested hearing by mail, email or FAX.

Relating to other CIVIL matters not mentioned above:

1. All currently scheduled small claim hearings will be rescheduled to after May 8, 2020. New filings will be scheduled after June 1, 2020.
2. All impound hearings will be scheduled/rescheduled to after June 1, 2020.

3. Request for name change petition forms may be made via phone, mail, email or FAX. Name change orders will be provided via U.S. mail. The petition form and instructions will also be available on the Whitman County District Court page at whitmancounty.org.
4. Civil motions may be noted and heard without oral argument. Ex-parte matters will continue to be processed. Any case requiring an in-person hearing will be scheduled after June 1, 2020.

Litigants, attorneys and other court participants who enter the Whitman County Court Facilities are expected to adhere to a six-foot social distancing radius from court staff, as well as other litigants and attorneys. Litigants, attorneys and other court participants who are sick or experiencing flu-like symptoms such as a cough, fever or other respiratory problems please DO NOT come into the court facilities, please contact the court via mail, email or telephone.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

This 17th day of March, 2020

Presiding Judge
Whitman County District Court