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

IN THE MATTER OF)	
)	NO.061520
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO PUBLIC)	
HEALTH THREAT)	THIRD 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 (followed by Orders B-606, B-607, B-615 and B-618) 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, and in addition, directed all public and private schools within the State

1 of Washington to close from March 17th through April 24, 2020, then subsequently extended
2 school closures through June 19, 2020; and

3 WHEREAS, Governor Inslee issued and extended a “Stay Home, Stay Healthy”
4 order directing non-essential businesses to close, banning public gatherings, and required
5 Washingtonians to stay home except to pursue essential activities. On May 1, 2020,
6 Governor Inslee extended this Order and announced a 4 Phased approach to reopening the
7 economy; and

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

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

18 WHEREAS, on April 28, 2020 the Washington Supreme Court entered the Second
19 Revised and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations No. 25700-B-618 extending and
20 amending previous orders.

21 WHEREAS, on May 29, 2020 the Washington Supreme Court entered the Third
22 Revised and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations No. 25700-B-626 extending and
23 amending previous orders.

24 WHEREAS, consistent with these recommendations and pursuant to the authority
25 given to this Court through the Washington State Supreme Court Orders 25700-B-602, 606,
26 607, 615, 618 and 626, and the authority granted to the Presiding Judge of the Whitman
27 County District Court pursuant to Washington State General Rule 29, this Emergency
28 Administrative Order is effective June 14, 2020 and shall remain in effect unless renewed,
modified or rescinded by the Presiding Judge for the Whitman County District Court.

WHEREAS, the latest Revised and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations No.
25700-B-626 states, “In all court operations, courts should follow the most protective public
health guidance applicable in their jurisdiction, and should continue using remote
proceedings for public health and safety whenever appropriate.” The order further states,
“courts should begin to hear non-emergency civil matters, so long as such matters can
appropriately be conducted by telephone, video or other remote means, or in person with
strict observance of social distancing and other public health measures.” The order also
states, “courts should hear (criminal) matters by telephone, video or other means that do not
require in person attendance when appropriate. In addition, courts may hear matters that
require in person attendance if those hearings strictly comply with social distancing and
other public health measures.”

WHEREAS, Whitman County entered into Phase Three of the State of Washington’s
Safe Start Phased Reopening Process on June 6, 2020.

1 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY and UNTIL FURTHER
2 ORDER OF THE COURT:

3 Relating to COURT ADMINISTRATION:

- 4 1. The Court's clerk window at the Colfax location will be reopen to the public. The
5 Pullman clerk's office will reopen when Pullman City Hall reopens. Payments will
6 continue to be accepted by mail, over the phone and via the drop box located
7 outside the court facilities.
8 2. The Court will maintain regular hours of operation unless otherwise amended by
9 further order and notice to the Administrative Office of the Courts.
10 3. The court will recommence with its normal operations with in-person hearings in
11 Colfax pursuant to any/all limitations and procedures outlined in this order.
12 Pullman hearings will recommence its normal operations with in-person hearings
13 in Pullman as soon as the Pullman City Hall reopens.
14 4. All filings will continue to be accepted via mail, email, fax or by placing in the
15 Court drop box.

11 Whitman County Courthouse
12 PO Box 230
13 Colfax WA 99111
14 Phone: (509)397-6260
15 FAX: (509)397-5584

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

16 Email: Please see District Court page at Whitmancounty.org

17 Drop boxes: Colfax – Clerk's Office counter – at the window
18 Pullman –located on the NW corner of Paradise & Kamiaken
19 Streets-marked Pullman City Hall

20 RELATING TO IN-PERSON HEARINGS

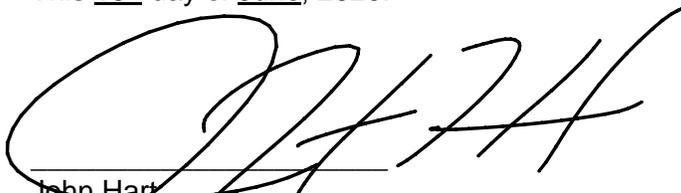
- 21 1. Litigants, attorneys and other court attendees who enter the Whitman County
22 Court Facilities are expected to adhere to a six-foot social distancing radius from
23 court staff, as well as other litigants and attorneys.
24 2. Pursuant to the order issued by the Washington State Supreme Court on May
25 29, 2020 and Governor Inslee's Safe Start Phased Reopening Process entered
26 on June 6, 2020, all courtroom attendees shall wear a mask or face covering
27 when entering and remaining in the courtroom, unless exempted (see below).
28 Any person actively participating in a court proceeding may remove their mask if
they wish. An "active participant" includes those seated at counsel tables,
including witnesses, attorneys and judge.
3. The follow individuals are exempted from the requirement to wear a mask:
a. Children two years or less.
b. Children under the age of twelve unless parents or caregivers supervise
the use of the face covering to avoid misuse;
c. Any person who has a physical disability that prevents easily wearing or
removing a face covering;
d. Any person who is deaf and uses facial and mouth movements as part of
their communication or an individual who is communicating with a person
who is deaf and uses facial and mouth movements as part of
communication;

- 1 e. Any person who has been advised by a medical professional that wearing
2 a facial covering may pose a risk to that individual for health-related
3 reasons.
4 f. Any person who has trouble breathing, or who is unconscious,
5 incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without
6 assistance.
- 7 4. Litigants, attorneys and other court participants who are sick or experiencing flu-
8 like symptoms such as a cough, fever or other respiratory problems shall NOT
9 come into the court facilities, please contact the court via mail, email or phone.
- 10 5. Social distancing markers and other signage have been applied to the courtroom.
11 All attendees are expected to follow all guidelines. The courtroom will have a
12 limited capacity due to social distancing. However, all hearings will be live-
13 streamed at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi7BJN3F3wVP3q2Aaa7_QfA.
14 Please contact the clerks if you wish to participate in a scheduled hearing
15 remotely.
- 16 6. Frequently touched surfaces will be routinely cleaned and disinfected. Hand
17 sanitizer and other cleaning products are available in and around the courtroom.
- 18 7. If you are in a “high-risk” category, live with such an individual or do not feel
19 comfortable attending court in person, you may contact the clerk’s office to
20 schedule a date and time to appear remotely utilizing video or tele-conferencing.
21 Persons in a “high risk” category include:
22 • Persons 65 years of age and older;
23 • People of all ages with underlying medical conditions (particularly not
24 well controlled),
25 including –
26 • People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma,
27 • People who have serious heart conditions,
28 • People who are immunocompromised,
• People with severe obesity,
• People with diabetes,
• People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, and
• People with liver disease; and
• People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.
8. If a court participant refuses to wear a mask or face covering, they will be
required to leave the courtroom and may return without a mask or face covering
to have their case heard after all other cases scheduled for that time have been
completed.

22 This order incorporates by reference the Washington State Supreme Court Third
23 Revised and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations, No 25700-B-626. Both Orders
24 shall be posted at the Whitman County District Court Clerk’s Office and online at
25 www.whitmancounty.org on the District Court page.

26 IT IS SO ORDERED.

27 This 15th day of June, 2020.

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John Hart
Presiding Judge, Whitman County District Court

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