

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7 **IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
8 **IN AND FOR WHITMAN COUNTY**  
9

10 IN THE MATTER OF )  
11 ) NO.050520  
12 EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO PUBLIC )  
13 HEALTH THREAT ) SECOND EMERGENCY  
14 (Coronavirus –COVID-19) ) ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER  
15 )  
16 )

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

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

24 WHEREAS, on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington  
25 Supreme Court adopted Order No. 25700-B-602 (followed by Orders B-606, B-607, B-615  
26 and B-618) granting emergency authority to the Presiding Judges of Washington courts to  
27 adopt, modify and/or suspend court rules and orders, and to take further actions concerning  
28 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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, consistent with these recommendations and pursuant to the authority  
22 given to this Court through the Washington State Supreme Court Orders 25700-B-602, 606,  
23 607, 615 and 618, and the authority granted to the Presiding Judge of the Whitman County  
24 District Court pursuant to Washington State General Rule 29, this Emergency Administrative  
25 Order is effective May 5, 2020 and shall remain in effect unless renewed, modified or  
26 rescinded by the Presiding Judge for the Whitman County District Court.

27 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY and UNTIL FURTHER  
28 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 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  
(509)332-2065  
(509)338-3318

1  
2 Email: Please see District Court page at Whitmancounty.org

3 Drop boxes: Colfax – Clerk’s Office counter – opening under window  
4 Pullman –located on the NW corner of Paradise & Kamiaken  
5 Streets-marked Pullman City Hall  
6

7 Relating to CRIMINAL MATTERS:

- 8 1. CrRLJ 4.1(a)(2) regarding “speedy arraignment” is hereby suspended until  
9 further order of this Court.  
10 2. CrRLJ 3.3(e)(8): All continuances granted and matters ordered rescheduled by  
11 the Court while this order is in effect shall be “excluded periods” for the purpose  
12 of calculating time for trial.  
13 3. The Court will continue to hold preliminary hearings for in-custody matters,  
14 domestic violence and driving while under the influence/physical control offenses.  
15 4. Effective immediately, the Court will continue or reschedule criminal matters until  
16 after June 1, 2020. The clerk will notify the parties of the new court date.  
17 Defendants will be sent notice via U.S. mail. Defendants may contact the Court  
18 to update a mailing address.  
19 5. The Court will hear in-custody cases via video if available.  
20 6. Pending matters may be heard via video or teleconferencing upon application  
21 and with agreement of all parties.  
22 7. A defendant may contact the Court by telephone, email or mail to request a  
23 bench warrant quash. The request will be heard ex parte by the Court. The  
24 defendant shall provide a current mailing address.  
25 8. Bench warrants issued prior to today’s date will remain active until served,  
26 recalled or quashed.  
27 9. All persons ordered to check-in with probation shall do so via telephone or email  
28 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

23 Relating to CIVIL PROTECTION ORDERS:

- 24 1. Individuals may request petitions for protection forms via telephone, mail, email  
25 or FAX. Forms may be downloaded at courts.wa.gov and  
26 www.whitmancounty.org on the District Court page.  
27 2. Full order hearings, motions to modify/terminate, and any other necessary  
28 hearing will be held telephonically or via video-conferencing.  
3. 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 June 1st, 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 until after June 1, 2020.
2. All impound hearings will be scheduled/rescheduled 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 phone.

This order incorporates by reference the Washington State Supreme Court Second Revised and Extended Order Regarding Court Operations, No 25700-B-618. Both Orders shall be posted at the Whitman County District Court Clerk's Office and online at [www.whitmancounty.org](http://www.whitmancounty.org) on the District Court page.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

This 5<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.



Presiding Judge John Hart  
Whitman County District Court