



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

IN RE: )  
 )  
 )  
 ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY )  
 RESTRICTIONS ON COURTHOUSE )  
 ACCESS AND IN COURT HEARINGS )  
 \_\_\_\_\_ )

GENERAL ORDER NO. 612

WHEREAS, the court previously has issued General Orders addressing the national, regional and local public health emergency posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak by continuing all trials to May 1, 2020;

WHEREAS, since the issuance of the court’s prior orders circumstances related to the outbreak have continued to quickly evolve, with state and local public agencies instituting further enhanced measures to manage the spread of the virus and limit the potential for the illness and death it can cause;

WHEREAS, within the Eastern District of California, the Sacramento County Public Health Department has now issued an order for residents to stay at home to the extent possible and many facilities to close, while recognizing the need for essential services to continue; and the Fresno County Board of Supervisors has adopted a Local Emergency resolution and that County has activated its Emergency Operations Center in response to COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the Judges of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California are continuing to balance the various interests implicated by the COVID-19 outbreak and the court’s response to the outbreak, including: the health of jurors, witnesses, parties, attorneys, the public whom it is our privilege to serve, Clerk’s Office and all court staff,

Probation and Pretrial Services staff, chambers staff and judges; the constitutional rights of criminal defendants and other parties; and the public's interest in, and the court's duty to ensure, the effective and expeditious administration of justice;

NOW THEREFORE, effective immediately through May 1, 2020, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California hereby issues the following Order to supplement its prior orders issued on March 12 and 17, 2020, with the findings relied on in those orders incorporated in full herein:

1. In light of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, all courthouses of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California shall be closed to the public. Only persons having official court business as authorized by a Judge of the District Court or the Bankruptcy Court, or a healthy building tenant having official business on behalf of a tenant agency, may enter courthouse property. This order applies to the following divisional locations:

- (1) The Robert T. Matsui United States Courthouse, 501 I Street, Sacramento;
- (2) The Robert E. Coyle United States Courthouse, 2501 Tulare Street, Fresno;
- (3) The Redding Federal Courthouse, 2986 Bechelli Lane, Redding;
- (4) The Bakersfield Federal Courthouse, 510 19th Street, Bakersfield;
- (5) The Yosemite Federal Courthouse, 9004 Castle Cliff Court, Yosemite; and
- (6) The Modesto U.S. Bankruptcy Court, 1200 I Street, Second Floor, Modesto.

2. All of the court's civil matters will be decided on the papers, or if the assigned Judge believes a hearing is necessary, the hearing will be by telephone or videoconference. This applies to all matters including motion hearings, case management conferences, pretrial conferences and settlement conferences.

3. In civil matters and bankruptcy matters in which parties represent themselves (pro se litigants), those parties are strongly encouraged to file documents by mail. For those unable to file by mail the court will provide drop boxes for filing inside the entrances to the Sacramento, Fresno and Modesto courthouses, that otherwise previously have accepted hand-delivered pro se filings in the Clerk's Offices for those courts.

4. In the court's criminal matters all initial appearances, arraignments and other essential proceedings will continue to be held before the duty Magistrate Judges, unless the parties agree to continue them; to the full extent possible matters that are maintained on calendar shall be conducted by telephone or video conference.

5. In criminal cases before the District Judges, the assigned District Judge may continue matters to a date after May 1, 2020, excluding time under the Speedy Trial Act with reference to the court's prior General Order 611 issued on March 17, 2020, with additional findings to support the exclusion in the Judge's discretion; if any criminal matters are maintained on calendar, to the full extent possible they shall be conducted by telephone or video conference.

6. Any Judge may order case-by-case exceptions to any of the above numbered provisions for non-jury court matters at the discretion of that Judge or upon the request of counsel, after consultation with counsel.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: March 18, 2020.

FOR THE COURT:

  
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CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE