

IN THE KING COUNTY DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON AND THE CITIES OF ALGONAⁱ, AUBURN,
BEAUX ARTS, BELLEVUE, BURIEN, CARNATION, COVINGTON, DUVALL,
KENMORE, PACIFIC*, REDMOND, SAMMAMISH, SHORELINE, AND SKYKOMISHⁱⁱ

IN THE MATTER OF THE EMERGENCY)
RESPONSE TO THE THREAT TO PUBLIC)
HEALTH.)
)
) EMERGENCY
) ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
) NO. 15-2021

This matter comes before the Court on the public health emergency in King County:

WHEREAS King County District Court continues to operate under a State of Emergency due to the continuing COVID-19 health pandemic;

WHEREAS the newly identified Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus is highly transmissible and has significantly increased the current number of infections in the King County region impacting the region’s healthcare system;

WHEREAS the King County Executive and Council have chosen to delay their return to work as a result of the variant and the King County Seattle Public Health Department reports the increase in cases remains a significant community concern;

WHEREAS Court operations are deemed an “essential” function pursuant to the Governor’s pandemic proclamations and King County District Court is governed by the laws of the State of Washington and the Washington Supreme Court’s Emergency Orders;

WHEREAS King County District Court has implemented safety protocols consistent with State Department of Health and other public health expert recommendations in order to reduce transmission of the COVID-19 virus;

WHEREAS the recently identified and highly transmissible Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus constitutes an unforeseen and unavoidable circumstance necessitating additional precautions be taken until the positivity rate for COVID-19 infections and the impact on the region’s health system improve;

WHEREAS bringing in jurors for in-person trials requires congregating a larger number of people in a concentrated indoor space which can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 even among those who are vaccinated against COVID-19;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby ORDERED:

King County District Court is pausing bringing in jurors for the selection and conducting of jury trials until February 7, 2022. Jurors summonsed to appear for service between this date and February 6, 2022, will be released from current service and may be deferred to serve at a later date in 2022. Parties scheduled to commence a trial in January of 2022 should report for their scheduled date to address future scheduling unless otherwise authorized by the trial court, in writing, in advance of the scheduled hearing date.

This Order is based, in part, on the Washington Supreme Court's Order of February 19, 2021, Washington State Labor and Industries Guidance and Requirements, June 30, 2021, Washington State Department of Health Order of the Secretary of Health Amending Order 20-03, June 29, 2021, and Governor Jay Inslee's remaining proclamations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic governing the effectiveness of certain laws.

The current public health situation is an unavoidable and unforeseen circumstance beyond the control of the Court necessitating the Court to pause compelling jurors to our courthouse locations for jury trials in the administration of justice. Any period of delay resulting from this Order should be excluded from speedy trial calculations consistent with CrRLJ 3.3.

During the period of this Order, individual judges retain the discretion to accommodate individual requests by a party or an attorney for video appearances or other reasonable accommodations when an in-person appearance is otherwise anticipated, for those persons defined by the CDC as more vulnerable to the effects of contracting the COVID-19 virus, or as otherwise required in the interests of justice.

This Order remains in effect until February 6, 2022, unless extended based upon available public health guidance and statistics. All other Orders of King County District Court remain in effect.

Entered this 29th day of December, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mahoney", written over a horizontal line.

Susan Mahoney
Chief Presiding Judge
King County District Court

¹ The Cities of Algona and Pacific become subject to this Order as of January 1, 2022.