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PIERCE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, STATE OF WASHINGTON

In Re

COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE
EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED
BY PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IN
WASHINGTON STATE

GENERAL ORDER
NO. 2020-04

WHEREAS On February 29, 2020, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency due to the public health emergency posed by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID – 19).

WHEREAS on March 16, 2020 this Court issued emergency General Orders 2020-02 and 2020-03 based on the March 4, 2020 Order No. 25700-B-602 from Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington State Supreme Court authorizing Presiding Judges to adopt, modify and 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 19, 2020 Chief Justice Debra Stephens of the Washington State Supreme Court adopted Corrected Order No. 25700-B-607, setting forth direction and authority to Presiding Judges of trial courts across the State to effectively

1 administer their courts in response to this state of emergency, including the authority to
2 adopt, modify, and suspend court rules and orders as warranted to address the
3 emergency conditions; and

4
5 WHEREAS on March 23, 2020 the Governor issued a Stay at Home order, in
6 effect from March 23, 2020 to April 8, 2020, subject to any extensions that the Governor
7 may order based on then current conditions; and

8 WHEREAS in response to the Governor's order, the majority of court staff are
9 working remotely from home, with only minimal staff on site; now

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11 THEREFORE, pursuant to the Court's authority to administer justice and to
12 ensure the safety of court personnel, litigants, and the public,

13 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED

14 (1) That the provisions of General Orders 2020-02 and 2020-03 (except as modified
15 herein) and Supreme Court Orders 25700-B606 and 25700-B607 (corrected) are
16 hereby incorporated herein.

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18 (2) Pierce County District Court remains open. However, because the public
19 counters typically open to the public are closed, Communication with Pierce
20 County District Court can be made as follows:

- 21 a. By Calling: 253-798-7487
22
23 b. Using live chat: <https://piercecountywa.gov/101/District-Court>
24
25 c. By email: PCDISTCRT1@piercecountywa.gov

26 Litigants, attorneys and the public are encouraged to visit the Pierce County
27 District Court website for updated information

1 (3) All Paragraph 4(v) of General Order 2020-02 is hereby amended to read as
2 follows:

3 4(v). Impound of vehicle or vessel. All time frames required by
4 RCW 46.55.120 are suspended. All requests for Impound Hearings may
5 be filed on-line by visiting the Pierce County District Court website at
6 <https://piercecountywa.gov/101/District-Court>. Filing fees will be waived
7 until further order of this Court. All court hearings will be postponed until
8 further Order of this court, unless a written request to the Court is
9 presented explaining the emergent need for a hearing. Upon a judicial
10 determination of an emergent need the Court Clerk will set a hearing date
11 which may be accomplished by a telephonic hearing.
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14 (4) All Paragraph 4(vi) of General Order 2020-02 is hereby amended to read as
15 follows:

16 4(vi). Impound of animal hearings and other animal control type
17 cases. All Petitions for return of animals may be filed on-line by visiting
18 the Pierce County District Court website at
19 <https://piercecountywa.gov/101/District-Court>. Filing fees will be due upon
20 the Court setting a court hearing. All court hearings will be postponed until
21 further Order of this court.
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23 All Petitions for Order of Protection for both Harassment and
24 Stalking may be filed on-line by visiting the Pierce County District Court
25 website at <https://piercecountywa.gov/101/District-Court>. Filing fees will
26 be waived until further order of this Court.
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1 (5) Paragraph 5 of General Order 2020-02 is hereby amended to read as follows:

2 5. Effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020 all requests for temporary Anti-
3 Harassment Orders will be reviewed in chambers based on the written
4 record. Hearings for final Orders will be scheduled as needed at the
5 discretion of the Court. The court reserves the right to continue any
6 scheduled full order hearings. To effectuate these continuances, the
7 maximum length of a temporary order issued pursuant to RCW
8 10.14.080(2) (Harassment) and RCW 7.92.120(5) (Stalking) shall be
9 suspended and the maximum length of a temporary shall be not more
10 than 30 days, subject to further Order of the Court. The hearings on the
11 Protection Orders shall be continued approximately 30 days to a date as
12 determined by the Clerk of the Court. If service has been made, the
13 parties will be notified in writing by U.S. mail of the new court date. If
14 service has not yet been made, the Petitioner will be notified in writing by
15 U. S. mail of the new court date and instructions as to the requirement for
16 service on the Respondent. Any party needing to update their mailing
17 address should contact the court.

18 (6) The Pierce County District Court Probation services are modified as follows:

- 19 a. In-person probation appointments will be conducted telephonically. All
20 individuals currently on probation are expected to stay in contact with their
21 probation officer and be available for telephonic appointments as
22 scheduled. Any defendant released from custody who is on probation
23 supervision will be required to call the probation department at 253-798-
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