



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Temporary Suspension of Jury Trials; Limited Public Access to Courtrooms

In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the President of the United States declared a national emergency and the Governor of California declared a state of emergency. Both emergency declarations remain in effect as the COVID-19 virus continues as a life-threatening pandemic throughout the county, state, and local jurisdictions.

In its efforts to protect the health and well-being of court personnel and the public throughout the pandemic, the Riverside Superior Court implemented various protocols intended to protect against the spread of the virus. As community spread of the virus lessened, the Court began resumption of normal operations in part by relaxing, and in some cases rescinding COVID-19 related protocols.

There is currently a pronounced spike in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the COVID-19 Omicron variant is highly transmissible and evades immunity provided by past infection or vaccination. Riverside County, already an area of high transmission, has recently experienced an alarming increase in

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COVID-19 cases. The State of California COVID-19 dashboard for Riverside County shows that the current rate of positive COVID-19 cases has risen to 26.9%, which is a 12.7% increase from the previous seven-day period, and exceeds the state average of 20.4%. Additionally, hospitalizations have risen sharply, nearly doubling over the past week.

In light of the ease of transmission of the Omicron variant, conducting jury trials would unduly endanger court personnel, litigants, attorneys, jurors, and the public, as well as threaten the continuous performance of essential Court functions and operations. Moreover, because congestion within a courtroom also increases the risk of transmission, alleviating congestion by re-instating a six (6) foot physical distance requirement in courtrooms, and limiting courtroom access to only those persons who have a matter on calendar would further protect the health and well-being of court personnel and the public.

Therefore, to protect the health and well-being of the public and court personnel, for good cause and pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure §§124 and 128, Government Code §68070, Cal. Rules of Court, rule 10.603, General Order 2022-8, the inherent powers of the Court (*In re Reno* (2012) 55 Cal.4th 428, 522), and in compliance with federal, state and local guidelines, the Court hereby issues [General Order No.: 2022-9](#).