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FILED
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

DEC 14 2020

V. Magaña

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

RE: LIMITED PUBLIC ACCESS TO
COURTHOUSES

GENERAL ORDER NO.: 2020-72

In March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor of California declared a statewide state of emergency, the President of the United States declared a national emergency, and the County of Riverside Public Health Officer declared a countywide emergency. Since that time the Riverside Superior Court (Court) has taken steps to ensure access to justice while safeguarding the health and well-being of those who work in or otherwise enter its courthouses.

In response to the pandemic, initially the Court closed courthouses and suspended services except for time-sensitive and essential functions. As the Court resumed operations it implemented protocols designed to protect the health and well-being of all court-users and staff against the spread of the virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the COVID-19 virus is spread mainly from person to person contact of those who are physically close, i.e. within six (6) feet. Thus, the Court ordered all persons within any courthouse to maintain physical distancing of at least six (6) feet, and to use mandatory face coverings. Furthermore, to enforce physical

1 distancing the Court reduced the number of people entering its courthouses by implementing
2 technology to facilitate remote appearances, limiting the matters to be heard at any one time on a
3 given day, modifying jury service processes, and instituting audio and video livestreaming of non-
4 confidential court hearings.

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6 The COVID-19 virus continues as a life-threatening pandemic throughout the country,
7 state, and local jurisdictions. Recently there has been unprecedented rise in the number of
8 COVID-19 cases resulting in a dramatic increase in hospitalizations at a rate that threatens to
9 overwhelm the hospital system. In response, on December 3, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom
10 announced a Regional Stay-At-Home-Order that would be applicable once a designated region
11 falls below 15% of ICU bed capacity. On December 6, 2020 the Southern California Region,
12 which includes the County of Riverside, fell below the 15% ICU bed capacity threshold,
13 triggering application of the Stay-At-Home Order to the County of Riverside for a minimum of
14 three weeks.

15 According to the State COVID-19 Dashboard, on December 8, 2020, the County of
16 Riverside ranked second in the state for new COVID-19 cases, with an increase of 28.6% over
17 the past 14 days. The County of Riverside Public Health System reports a 14.8% positivity rate,
18 and ICU bed availability of only 6.1%, which is significantly less than the 10.6% capacity of the
19 Southern California Region.

20 Due to the rise in the spread of the COVID-19 virus throughout the state and particularly
21 within the County of Riverside, the Court must take additional steps to further safeguard the health
22 and well-being of all court-users and court staff. Therefore, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure
23 §128, Government Code §68070, Cal. Rules of Court, rule 10.603, the inherent powers of the
24 Court (*In re Reno* (2012) 55 Cal.4th 428, 522), and in compliance with federal, state and local
25 guidelines, the Court finds and orders as follows:

26 1. In order to reduce the number of people within courthouses and maintain physical
27 distancing, access to courthouses, courtrooms, clerk's offices, and public areas is restricted to
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1 judicial officers, court staff, persons seeking or participating in emergency services, and persons
2 required or permitted to appear for scheduled proceedings.

3 2. Access to in-person court proceedings is limited to summoned jurors, parties, their
4 attorneys, witnesses subpoenaed to testify, one support person statutorily permitted to accompany
5 a person seeking a temporary restraining order, and other authorized persons.
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7 3. The term "other authorized persons" includes, but is not limited to members of the
8 press and media subject to prior approval as set forth in Cal. Rules of Court, rule 1.150, or
9 pursuant to any other applicable rule, order or policy.

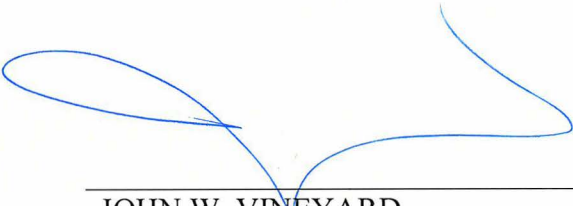
10 4. The Court recognizes the right of public access to court proceedings. Thus, as of
11 June 22, 2020, access to non-confidential court proceedings has been available to the public
12 through audio and video Livestreaming. Information about Courtroom Livestreaming is available
13 on the Court's website at www.riverside.courts.ca.gov.

14 5. This order does not restrict or otherwise abrogate the express or inherent authority
15 of the Court and its judges to provide for the orderly conduct of proceedings.

16 The Court reserves the authority to rescind or modify any part of this order, as appropriate,
17 to address changing circumstances.

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19 IT IS SO ORDERED

20 Date: 12/14/2020

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24 JOHN W. VINEYARD
25 Presiding Judge
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