

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

FILED  
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

JAN 4 2022

V. Magaña

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

RE:  
TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF  
JURY TRIALS; LIMITED PUBLIC  
ACCESS TO COURTROOMS

GENERAL ORDER NO.: 2022-9

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

ORDER RE: TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF JURY TRIALS; LIMITED PUBLIC ACCESS TO  
COURTROOMS

1 highly transmissible and evades immunity provided by past infection or vaccination. First  
2 identified in November of 2021, in a short period of time the Omicron variant has led to an  
3 exponential increase in COVID-19 infections worldwide, throughout California, and within the  
4 County of Riverside. Riverside County, already an area of high transmission, has recently  
5 experienced an alarming increase in COVID-19 cases. The State of California COVID-19  
6 dashboard for Riverside County shows that the current rate of positive COVID-19 cases has risen  
7 to 26.9%, which is a 12.7% increase from the previous seven-day period, and exceeds the state  
8 average of 20.4%. Additionally, hospitalizations have risen sharply, nearly doubling over the  
9 past week.  
10

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

18 Therefore, to protect the health and well-being of the public and court personnel, for good  
19 cause and pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure §§124 and 128, Government Code §68070, Cal.  
20 Rules of Court, rule 10.603, General Order 2022-8, the inherent powers of the Court (*In re Reno*  
21 (2012) 55 Cal.4th 428, 522), and in compliance with federal, state and local guidelines, the Court  
22 hereby finds and orders as follows:

23 1. All civil and criminal jury trials are hereby suspended through January 28, 2022. This  
24 order is only applicable to jury trials that have not commenced. This order does not affect jury  
25 trials that are in progress, which will be addressed on a case by case basis by the judicial officer  
26 presiding over the trial.  
27  
28

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

2. Access to in-person court proceedings is limited to parties, their attorneys, witnesses subpoenaed to testify, one support person statutorily permitted to accompany a person seeking a temporary restraining order, and other authorized persons.

3. The term “other authorized persons” includes, but is not limited to members of the press and media subject to prior approval as set forth in Cal. Rules of Court, rule 1.150, or pursuant to any other applicable rule, order or policy.

4. The Court recognizes the right of public access to court proceedings. Thus, access to non-confidential court proceedings will be available to the public through audio and video Livestreaming. Information about Courtroom Livestreaming is available on the Court’s website at <https://www.riverside.courts.ca.gov/OnlineServices/CourtroomLivestreaming/courtroom-livestreaming.php>

5. All persons within any courtroom must maintain physical distance from all other persons of at least six (6) feet.

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

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

8. This order is effective January 5, 2022.

IT IS SO ORDERED

Date: 1/4/22

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JOHN M. MONTEROSSO  
Presiding Judge