Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

Tara M. Desautels, Presiding Judge

Charles Smiley, Assistant Presiding Judge

Chad Finke, Executive Officer

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA: Superior Court of Alameda County announces remote "reopening."

The Superior Court of Alameda County (Court) announced today that, beginning June 1, 2020, it will resume or expand numerous court functions, effectively "reopening" to the extent that court business can be conducted remotely within existing resource and technological limitations. However, due to Alameda County's ongoing shelter-in-place restrictions and public health concerns, the Court and its clerk's office locations will remain closed to the public.

The Court's decision coincides with the upcoming expiration of the May 1, 2020, Emergency Order issued by Hon. Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, Chief Justice of California and Chair of the Judicial Council of California. It also aligns with the recent Order (20-11) of the Alameda County Public Health Officer, which relaxed certain COVID-related restrictions and moved Alameda County into the early part of "Phase 2" of California's reopening plan.

Accordingly, starting June 1, the Court will resume hearing small claims trials. Trials will be calendared in Oakland in Department 106 of the Wiley Manuel Courthouse (WWM), and in Hayward in Department 519 of the Hayward Hall of Justice (HHJ), but they will only be heard remotely via the Court's BlueJeans platform. The Court will provide hearing specifics to litigants via notice. Litigants should also familiarize themselves with the Court's emergency Local Rules concerning remote hearing procedures, as well as the information provided on the Court's COVID-19 web page.

Also effective June 1, the Court is expanding its hearing opportunities for civil harassment, elder abuse, gun violence, and domestic violence restraining orders calendared at both WWM and HHJ. Again, all such hearings will be conducted via remote videoconference. The Court is similarly expanding its hearing opportunities for all family law and probate matters. Litigants are encouraged to review the Court's civil FAQ and COVID-19 web page for additional specifics. Members of the public can access these and any other non-confidential proceedings through the Court's live audio stream.

Further, with the unanimous approval of its Judicial Executive Committee, the Court has adopted new emergency Local Rules 1.8b and 4.116, and has amended Local Rule 3.30 and emergency Local Rule 4.115, all effective Thursday, May 21, 2020. These rules are all designed to further facilitate proceedings in civil and criminal matters during the COVID-19 crisis. Among other things, they set forth guidance for participating in remote proceedings, provide clarification on how to obtain tentative rulings, and detail the process by which requests can be made under Penal Code 1269c to set bail at an amount other than as provided in the emergency bail schedules within the parameters of the Court's Pretrial Risk Assessment Pilot Program.

As the May 31, 2020 expiration of the Court's current emergency order approaches, the Court will continue to expand remote opportunities as resource and health and safety constraints permit. For the latest Court re-opening updates, please continue to follow the Court on Twitter at @AlamedaSuperior and regularly check the Court's COVID-19 web page.