

## **Court Employee FAQs**

### **Q: If a shelter-in-place order is enacted for San Diego County, will the Court still continue offering services?**

A: Yes, although the services available may be limited according to the circumstances presented. The Courts are deemed an “essential” operation, similar to law enforcement and health care providers even during emergency situations. The Court is required to continue to perform its core judicial functions to ensure access to justice, protect due process, and provide a forum for the orderly resolution of disputes. Usually, we are serving the most critical needs of the most vulnerable in our community, including the elderly, children, and victims of domestic violence, and those whose lives and liberty are at stake. The Court makes reasonable efforts to comply with guidance issued by local, state, and federal health authorities in order to protect the health, safety, and well-being of its employees, as well as jurors, witnesses, counsel, litigants, and other members of the public, while fulfilling its important constitutional duty to remain open and serve the needs of the community. In an effort to follow such guidance and reduce the spread of COVID-19, currently, only the following services are available from March 17 to April 3, 2020:

- Chamber ex parte requests for civil harassment TROs, DVTROs, and Gun Violence Protective Orders.
- Emergency ex parte lockout proceedings (UD).
- One Family law judge at each branch will review ex parte requests for emergency TROs.
- One Juvenile judge will be available for dependency detention hearings and for emergency orders.
- One Probate judge will be available to cover emergency conservatorships and other emergency orders in Probate.
- All search warrants (day and night) will be electronic.
- Petitions for writ seeking emergency relief in unlawful detainer matters.
- Emergency writs challenging COVID-19 emergency measures.
- Writs of habeas corpus challenging medical quarantines.

### **Q: If a shelter-in-place order is enacted for San Diego County, will I be allowed to leave my home and to come to work?**

A: Yes. From a review of other shelter-in-place orders currently in California, these orders do not affect essential government services. The services provided by the Court are considered an essential function of the criminal justice system, like those of other law enforcement agencies. Court operational needs will continue to determine which functions are essential and which employees will be asked to report to work at Court locations.

**Q: During the time the Court is offering limited services, can I be called in and required to return to work?**

A: Yes. Employees must remain on call during this period and may be expected to report to work at any time based on the Court's determination regarding which operations, functions, and employees are necessary to support the most critical Court services and to prepare for resumption of services.

**Q: What social distancing measures should employees be taking at work?**

A: The Court feels a strong responsibility for our employees' health and safety during this public health emergency. To address these safety concerns, the Court has already implemented social distancing and is preventing anyone who is ill from entering court facilities. Social distancing and distancing work stations will be applied for those who report to work at a Court facility. Where it is possible and feasible, remote or telecommuting work may be assigned. Employees should maintain spacing of 6ft between themselves and others for the majority of the time. Signs will be posted to encourage Court customers to do the same. Standard in-person committee meetings should be replaced with conference calls to the extent possible. Not sharing food in common is also recommended.

The Court will continue to provide, as available and appropriate, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, gloves, and other protective items. The additional cleaning and disinfecting services will continue.

The Court continues to stress the following prevention measures:

- Wash your hands briskly and often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash. Immediately wash your hands.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

**Q: When might the Court ask me to leave work or stay home?**

A: You must advise the Court, and the Court will ask you to leave work or stay home in the following circumstances:

- If you have a diagnosis of COVID-19 or if your medical provider feels that your illness may be COVID-19.
- If you have had a known exposure to someone who has active symptoms or who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- If, within the past 14 days, you have traveled from a country designated by the CDC as a Level 3 Travel Health Notice country (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>).
- If you have or are developing symptoms of cough, fever, and/or shortness of breath.
- If a symptom, such as coughing, is becoming more severe.

Note: Your personal health information will remain confidential.

**Q: When can I return to work?**

A: When:

- The Court deems it safe and appropriate for you to return to work.
- If a public health authority or your medical provider determines that you should be quarantined, you may return to work when the quarantine period is over and if you have not developed symptoms.
- If you have been sick, and COVID-19 may (or may not) have been suspected, you may return to work when you have been free of fever (100.4 or more), cough, and shortness of breath for a minimum of 24 hours without medication.

**Q: How can I find out the latest status updates from the Court:**

A: The Court will continue to communicate with you as this situation continues to evolve. We will communicate in the following ways:

- Via text message, phone call, and/or personal email through the “RapidReach” Emergency Notification System.
- Via work email during standard work hours or accessed from home for the purposes of reading COVID-19-related updates only.
- Via phone calls, text messages, video chats, or conference calls from your Manager or Supervisor.
- Via the “COVID-19” section on the Court’s main public internet page ([www.sdcourt.ca.gov](http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov))

*Additional FAQs with employee-specific timecard information have been sent by Court email.*