



**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**
400 COUNTY CENTER
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063-1655

June 12, 2020

For Immediate Release

San Mateo Superior Court to Resume Jury Trials, as Court Slowly Re-opens from Pandemic Crisis

The San Mateo Superior Court will resume hearing jury trials beginning on Monday, June 15, 2020, court officials announced this afternoon. Jurors have been summoned and selection will begin for a criminal jury trial, slated to begin on Monday. One other suspended jury trial is scheduled to re-start later in June, with another suspended jury trial sometime in July.

Jury trials were suspended three months ago, as courts, statewide, were forced to severely curtail operations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

To safeguard the health and safety of jurors, court staff have implemented new policies and procedures to maintain social distancing and reduce the likelihood of virus transmission.

“Jury trials are at the heart of ensuring public access to justice, and as an essential service, courts must make every effort to protect the public that uses our court facilities and services,” stated Presiding Judge Jonathan E. Karesh.

Jurors and the public reporting to the Redwood City courthouse will be required to wear face coverings and expected to respect personal space and social distancing with other members of the public.

Jurors can expect to first check in at an outdoor tent where they will register their attendance and complete a simple on-site health screening consisting of a self-reporting of their health status. Jurors are encouraged to report any significant symptoms or health issues and may be excused from jury duty.

Seating in waiting rooms, the courtroom, and in jury deliberation have been reduced and spread out in multiple locations to maintain social distancing. Seating in courtrooms and waiting lines in hallways may be marked to guide jurors and the public.

Elevators will be limited to two occupants at one time.

Jurors can expect all court employees inside the courthouse to be wearing face coverings, and hand sanitizer stations and rubber gloves will be provided as needed to maintain a clean and safe environment. Facilities staff will provide increased routine cleaning of courtrooms jury assembly rooms, and restrooms to accommodate the public.

The court also expects that smaller groups of jurors will be scheduled to report in at any one time, further reducing crowds and the potential gathering of large groups of people.

Because of the need to avoid large crowds of jurors and litigants, and the physical limitation of people that can access the courthouse, the court will not be able to schedule as many jury trials as is normal, according to Presiding Judge Karesh.

“Our judicial officers are cognizant that this unprecedented, worldwide, pandemic is causing unavoidable delays to justice in our courts. We ask for the public’s patience and cooperation. It is our intent to make the jury trial process as safe, efficient, and comfortable as possible for the public that serve as our jurors,” Karesh said.

Neal Taniguchi, Court Executive Officer and Jury Commissioner, said “Assembly and selection of jurors for trials has been one of the largest public health challenges presented to courts everywhere. A jury trial of our peers is at the heart of our system of justice, and as the most recognizable institution of justice, the courts must ensure that jury trials can be conducted safely for both the jurors, and the public in court.”

The Court has provided guidance on the pandemic on its jury summons. Jurors may also find additional information at www.sanmateocourt.org, under the heading of jury services, or by calling jury services at (650) 599-1700.

For further information contact Court Executive Officer Neal Taniguchi at (650) 261-5030

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