



Superior Court of California County of Orange ***News Release***

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URGENT RELEASE:

Orange County Superior Court Announces Soft Re-Opening

On Tuesday, May 26, 2020, the Superior Court of California, County of Orange will re-open courthouses for limited services, but members of the public should not visit a courthouse unless they have been notified by the Court that they have a hearing scheduled on their matter.

Beginning May 26, 2020, the branch courthouses will begin conducting preliminary hearings on felony matters. Criminal jury trials will start up in June. The number of hearings and trials is expected to grow over the coming weeks, as conditions allow. "We will be resuming four criminal jury trials that were suspended due to the Court closure and we hope to commence additional criminal jury trials in early June," said Orange County Superior Court Presiding Judge Kirk Nakamura.

Public service windows will remain closed, as this is a soft reopening. Since the Court is not yet able to assist parties on a walk-in basis, it will continue to provide drop boxes for filing documents. The Court recommends all persons consult the Court's coronavirus website (<https://www.occourts.org/media-relations/CoronaVirusUpdate.html>) for more details and the most up-to-date information regarding their case type.

As part of the soft opening, **the Court will be strictly enforcing health protocols. The use of facemasks or face coverings is mandatory for anyone entering a courthouse. Social distancing rules will also be strictly enforced in all facilities**, thus the number of individuals entering public courtrooms and elevators will be subject to space limitations. **Persons displaying possible coronavirus symptoms will not be allowed in court facilities.**

The gradual reopening is necessary to ensure that the Court, as well all court users, comply with all Federal, State, and local health guidelines. The gradual reopening will enable the Court to slowly increase the caseload and visitor level at each courthouse, while at the same time monitor that health protocols are being followed.

The public is encouraged to visit the OC Health Care Agency website for up-to-date information about COVID-19 symptoms:

http://www.ochealthinfo.com/phs/about/epidasmt/epi/dip/prevention/novel_coronavirus

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