



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
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Effective May 6, 2020

Implementation of Court Closure Mitigation Plan for May 6, 2020 Until Further Notice

Family Law Proceedings

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to pose an unprecedented health and safety threat to the public. Due to the increasing risks presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, all court operations shall be closed to the public as provided for in the General Order of the Presiding Judge, dated April 16, 2020. (<https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/general/docs/april-16-2020-order-closure-extension-and-added-emergency-relief.pdf>).

As the state and county public health directive to “stay at home” continues to extend, it has become necessary to balance the safety of our community and explore the use of alternative technology and innovation to incrementally increase essential court services. Consistent with the Order signed by the Presiding Judge (<https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/general/docs/order-end-of-filing-holiday-and-resumption-of-specified-proceedings-family-law-corrected.pdf>) on April 30, 2020, the court is authorizing the resumption of limited but essential services in Family Law as set forth below.

In addition to the later referenced resumption of outlined services, the Family Court will still continue critical services including:

1. Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse Restraining Orders
2. Emergency Family Law Applications (Ex Partes) – Monday through Friday, 8:30 am and 10:30am

To avoid delay in processing your ex parte application, you must follow the procedural directives for notice, provision of telephone contact information for all parties, and submission of a proof of service as applicable.

Zoom Telepresence Hearings

All hearings scheduled and rescheduled starting on May 11, 2020, moving forward, until further notice, will be Zoom telepresence hearings. There will be no public physical access to the courtrooms.

In order to participate in your Zoom hearing, you must either use a computer or smart device with internet access, and have downloaded the Zoom Application. If you do not have compatible technology, then you can attend the hearing using a telephone and calling a designated toll free Zoom telephone line.

You must appear by Zoom using the designated department account referenced in your notification at least 5 minutes before your scheduled hearing date and time; and wait for a court representative to take roll. The court will provide Zoom account/ID information to you with your notification of a scheduled or rescheduled hearing. For further Zoom Instructions, please click the link to the court's webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/docs/zoom-court-hearing-instructions-042320.pdf>.

Prior to your scheduled hearing date, please continue to frequently check the Family and Children section of the Sacramento Superior Court Webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/family-law.aspx>, for any new information and advisements, as hearings could potentially change from Zoom to in-person hearings.

Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse Restraining Orders

1. Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse Restraining Orders can be filed via the court drop-box (located at the Family Court @ 3341 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, CA 95826) or by emailing to Dept125@saccourt.ca.gov.
2. The requesting party must provide a valid telephone contact number on their documents in order for staff to contact them regarding filing deficiencies and the status of their pending request. Applications received Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 am and 2 pm, may result in a same day order, if all paperwork is successfully completed. Those filed after 2 pm will likely be completed and ready the following business day.
3. Once the court grants or denies the request, court staff will contact the filing party by phone to arrange pick-up accordingly at the drop-box. Certified copies as prescribed by law will be provided.
4. Any future hearings will be set for Zoom telepresence hearings. Instructions on how to participate in a Zoom hearing will be provided as Zoom hearings are scheduled.
5. The court will also issue Family Court Services referrals for mediation in cases with related custody and visitation issues.

Emergency Family Law Applications (Ex Partes)

1. In the event of an emergency situation, the moving party may present an *ex parte* application for immediate relief upon proper notice to the opposing party via the court drop-box (located at the Family Court @ 3341 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, CA 95826) or by emailing to FLCovid19expertes@saccourt.ca.gov. Parties must submit their *ex parte* application via drop-box or email at least 24 hours in advance of their desired *ex parte* hearing, date and time. For example, if your *ex parte* is noticed for Wednesday, May 13, 2020, at 8:30 am, you are required to submit your *ex parte* application to the court by Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 8:30 am. Failure to comply may result in the *ex parte* not being adjudicated and/or may require the *ex parte* be reset for proper noticing.
2. *Ex parte* applications can be considered at both **8:30 am, and 10:30 am**. Parties must provide notice to the other party for a specific timeslot, either for 8:30 am or 10:30 am.
3. The moving party must not only provide the opposing party with the noticed date and time (Monday through Friday; 8:30 am or 10:30 am) of the *ex parte* application, but also a (hard or electronic) copy of the application. Both components shall be included in the completed proof

of service which must be filed with the court via drop-box or email at least 24 hours in advance of the ex parte hearing date.

4. A Responding party to a noticed ex parte hearing may submit a written response for consideration. The response shall be submitted by email to FLCovid19expertes@saccourt.ca.gov, by 8:30 am on the day of the ex parte hearing with a copy to the moving party.
5. Additionally, the moving party must provide current telephone numbers for all parties, in the event the ex parte application requires a Zoom telepresence appearance and/or hearing to be scheduled. If a Zoom appearance is needed, the court will contact the parties and provide instructions. Once the Family Law Judicial Officer rules, based on the pleadings and/or after the Zoom ex parte appearance, a court representative will make the orders and documents available either by pick-up from the drop-box, attorney box, electronically (if email address provided), or preferentially by posting the order via the Public Case Access System (PCAS).
6. Parties are required to comply with any service requirements after or following the ex parte hearing and to submit to the court a proof of service prior the return hearing.
7. Counsel and parties are reminded that ex parte relief may only be granted upon a showing of irreparable harm or immediate danger as set forth in Family Code Section 3064 and California Rules of Court Section 5.151(d).
8. Any future hearings set as a result of an ex parte application will be set for Zoom return hearings and appearances may be subject to later change. Instructions on how to participate in a Zoom hearing will be provided as Zoom hearings are scheduled.

Law & Motion Hearings

1. In order to address the backlog, court calendars for Law and Motion proceedings will resume and be heard on Monday through Thursday, at 9:00 am and 1:30 pm, and Friday at 9:00 am. However, in order to observe social distancing, not all departments will run concurrently. Odd numbered Law and Motion departments (121, 123, 127) will run one week (commencing May 11, 2020), and the even departments (120, 122, 124, 126) will run the following week (commencing May 18, 2020) on a rotational basis thereafter. Information will be posted to the court's website when the court can resume and transition back to normal court calendar configurations and settings.
2. Law & Motion Calendars will resume the week of May 11, 2020, using Zoom telepresence hearings. Parties with hearings already scheduled during the week of May 11, 2020 and beyond will received notification through the Public Case Access System confirming their hearing date and time, and will include instructions for participating in a Zoom hearing.
3. Unfortunately, some hearings currently set on and beyond May 11, 2020, will need to be rescheduled to different hearing dates, due to calendaring limitations and conflicts. These parties will receive notification through the Public Case Access System of their new Zoom hearing date, including instructions for using Zoom.
4. Missed hearings from March 20, 2020 through May 8, 2020, will be reset and continued out to the first available hearing as calendars allow. Priority will be given to cases involving Custody

and Visitation. All others will be continued out to the first available hearing date thereafter. Parties shall plan accordingly for Zoom hearings.

5. The court recognizes that all parties may not be registered and receive notification through the Public Case Access System. Therefore, the moving party shall comply with any noticing provisions as set for in the posted minute order with regards to the underlying motion, Zoom appearance and instructions, including filing a proof of service of such, to ensure the responding party is properly noticed.
6. Please continue to check the Family and Children section of the Sacramento Superior Court Webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/family-law.aspx> for any new information and advisements.

Trials and Settlement Conferences

1. At the present time, trials and settlement conferences have not been reset or continued, but will occur as soon as administratively possible.
2. Once rescheduling and scheduling of trials (and settlement conferences) occur, priority will be given to those impacted by the court closure, giving deference to those involving custody, visitation, termination of parental rights and domestic violence.
3. Presently, the full week of July 6, 2020 through July 10, 2020 has been dedicated to trial proceedings, which will help mitigate the backlog of trials resulting from the court closure.
4. Please continue to check the Family and Children section of the Sacramento Superior Court Webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/family-law.aspx> for any new information and advisements.

Department of Child Support Services Cases (D-132)

1. Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) hearings in D-132 will resume beginning May 11, 2020, Monday through Friday, using Zoom telepresence appearances.
 - a. Hearings on motions not filed by DCSS already set prior to the court closure for May 11, 2020 and beyond will proceed as set, and DCSS will provide notification to parties, including Zoom instructions.
 - b. Hearings on motions filed by DCSS already set prior to the court closure have been rescheduled to the first available date starting May 18, 2020, for a Zoom hearing. DCSS has provided notification to parties, including Zoom instructions. If you have not received notification, please contact DCSS.
2. Hearings scheduled for custody, visitation and support, where DCSS is involved, will resume starting May 26, 2020, allowing Family Court Services time to prepare mediation reports for family law departments.
3. DCSS trials and settlement conference will be reset as soon as administratively possible.

4. Please continue to check the Family and Children section of the Sacramento Superior Court Webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/family-law.aspx> for any new information and advisements, as ongoing information is subject to change.

Domestic Violence/Elder Abuse Court (D-125)

Domestic Violence/Elder Abuse Court Department 125 resumed court hearings effective April 17, 2020, Monday through Friday, using telephone conferences.

Court hearings effective May 11, 2020, will be Zoom telepresence hearings. For further Zoom Instructions, please click the link to the court's webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/docs/zoom-court-hearing-instructions-042320.pdf>.

1. If you had a hearing during the court closure period from March 20, 2020 through April 16, 2020, that was missed, your matter has been administratively rescheduled by the court. To locate your new appearance date, please refer to the court webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/general/docs/family-law-public-notice-domestic-violence-and-elder-abuse-restraining-orders-041420.pdf>.
2. Any party wishing to file documents with the court for upcoming hearings or to obtain access to their case through the [Public Case Access System](#) may submit them up to the day before the hearing in the drop box at the William R. Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
3. Please continue to check the Family and Children section of the Sacramento Superior Court Webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/family-law.aspx> for any new information and advisements.

Court Filings

1. Consistent with the Order for Resumption of Services signed by the Presiding Judge on April 30, 2020, the Family Court will resume handling and processing US Mail and drop box mail effective May 6, 2020. Any mail received during the court closure period between March 20, 2020 and May 5, 2020, will be processed as soon as administratively possible, and filed dated as May 6, 2020. Please note that proposed judgments and stipulations require judicial review and will be processed as soon as administratively possible, so filed dates will vary.
2. For the purposes of preserving the retroactivity date for modification of (child and spousal) support, the Judicial Council has addressed this issue by implementing Emergency Rule 13, effective April 20, 2020. See Judicial Council web link at: <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/2020-04-19-rules-effective-04-20-2020.pdf>.
3. Please refer to the court web link for the Presiding Judge's Order at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/general/docs/order-end-of-filing-holiday-and-resumption-of-specified-proceedings-family-law-corrected.pdf>.
4. Hearings generated from any such filings will be scheduled for Zoom telepresence hearings. Zoom instructions are located on the court's webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/docs/zoom-court-hearing-instructions-042320.pdf>.

Self Help Center

1. Commencing May 1, 2020, the Self Help Center will re-open e-Correspondence services.
 - a. Services provided can include assistance with restraining orders and short cause hearings involving child support and child custody.
 - b. Additionally, services will include document review before filing assistance.
2. Commencing May 18, 2020, the Self Help Center will offer Zoom telepresence workshops, which can include assistance with Requests for Order, Income and Expense Declarations, and Domestic Violence Restraining Orders.
3. Commencing June 1, 2020, the Self Help Center will offer services with File Review.
4. Assistance with the above referenced services can be initiated through the e-Correspondence system. Please continue to check the Family and Children section of the Sacramento Superior Court Webpage at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/family-law.aspx> for any new information and advisements, as ongoing information is subject to change.

Family Court Services (FCS)

1. Given the continued duration of the court closure, it has become increasingly necessary to address missed hearings, particularly those involving custody and visitation requiring mediations. Therefore, hearings and mediations will resume.
2. All mediations missed since the court closure on March 20, 2020, will be rescheduled with notification of new mediation dates sent to parties and attorneys by US Mail. Mediations will be conducted only by Zoom telepresence and begins on May 11, 2020, with court hearing return dates as soon as the week of May 25, 2020.
3. It is incumbent on everyone to be patient because there are approximately 800 mediations that need to be set or rescheduled.
4. Accommodations will be made to interview children, when deemed appropriate by the court in its referral to FCS, or by the mediator in their discretion.
5. The court also recognizes the challenges of submitting the 10-page FCS packet and parenting plan questionnaires, as well as notifying the court of stipulations for continuances and other needs. Therefore, in addition to submitting paperwork via US Mail and drop box, a dedicated email box will be created for this purpose. The designated email address will be contained within the FCS notification sent out to parties.

As information can change quickly, please continue to check the Sacramento Superior Court Webpage frequently at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/family-law.aspx> for any new information and advisements. Thank you for your patience during this time.