

SEATAC MUNICIPAL COURT  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

IN THE MATTER OF:	)	ADMINISTRATIVE
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC	)	ORDER SUSPENDING
OUTBREAK OF THE CORONAVIRUS	)	JURY TRIALS FOR
DISEASE (COVID-19) IN WASHINGTON	)	JANUARY 2022
STATE	)	NO. 22-01

THIS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER is being issued in response to the current pandemic outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). As of December 30th, 2021, there are 846,480 confirmed cases of the disease in Washington State, including 200,873 confirmed cases in King County. The recent post-Delta spike in confirmed cases is the result of the emergence of the Omicron variant. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Omicron variant spreads more easily than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus and the CDC expects that anyone with Omicron infection can spread the virus to others, even if they are vaccinated or do not have symptoms. King County is experiencing an 88% increase in new cases.

This Court's decision to take emergency action is based upon the actions taken by federal, state, and local governments, as well as the following: the significant spike of identified and projected cases of COVID-19 in Washington State and nationally, the increasing number of fatalities attributed to the disease, as well as the current and evolving recommendations of the Washington State and King County Departments of Health (DOH) and the CDC relating to masking, testing, and social distancing efforts. Conducting a jury trial involves 10-15 people inside the courtroom over a number of hours. The Court finds that the DOH recommended mitigation efforts, including but not limited to, social distancing and installation of plastic and Plexiglas barriers in the courtroom are insufficient to adequately minimize the risk of transmission during this period of the pandemic. THEREFORE, the Court finds that the current and unprecedented public health crisis, where community transmission is at its highest peak since the start of the pandemic, demands immediate action by the Court to protect the health and welfare of those who access the court, the general public, and court staff.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

**1.Suspension**

Effective immediately, the Court suspends all jury trials for the January 2022 jury term.

**2.Suspension of Evidentiary Hearings Requiring In-person Testimony**

Effective immediately, the Court suspends all evidentiary hearings where in-person testimony is required; all other evidentiary hearings may proceed using the Zoom application if all parties agree.

**3.Time for Trial**

Continuances pursuant to this Administrative Order will be “excluded periods” under CrRLJ 3:3(e)(8) [*unavoidable or unforeseen circumstances*] in computing the time for trial.

**4.Modification, Amendment, or Rescission of this Order.**

The Court may rescind or amend this order for the February 2022, jury term and beyond depending upon the public health information and recommendations at that time.

DATED this 10th day of January, 2022.



Hon. Pauline Freund, Presiding Judge