

NOTICE OF CORONAVIRUS REOPENING MEASURES
(May 20, 2020)

To All Counsel, Parties, Witnesses, and Visitors to the Southern District of California Courthouse Facilities:

Last week, I signed an Order expanding the types of in-person proceedings that our Court will resume on June 1. A copy of the Order is available [here](#) (OCJ 27). These include preliminary proceedings in criminal cases, such as arraignments and hearings on waivers of indictment, but also more substantive proceedings, such as motion and evidentiary hearings, sentencings, and felony and misdemeanor bench trials. In-person proceedings will be limited to criminal defendants **who are not presently in custody**, and the scheduling of these proceedings will be at the discretion of the assigned judge. Before scheduling in-person proceedings, each judge will determine whether conducting in-person proceedings poses a risk to the health and safety of any participant in the proceedings and will accommodate any person who expresses a reasonable concern over appearing in-person. Last week's Order also authorizes judges to conduct in-person proceedings except jury trials in all **civil cases** – again subject to known or expressed health and safety concerns.

As we resume limited in-person proceedings and begin to expand Court operations more generally, I want to assure each of you that our Court is observing all recommended precautions and taking all necessary measures to protect the public, counsel, litigants, and Court staff. These include screening to prevent high-risk visitors from entering our courthouses, requiring the use of face coverings in courtrooms and in all public areas (and providing face coverings for those who arrive without them), placing signage in elevator bays to limit the number of people who may occupy an elevator at one time, placing hand-sanitizer dispensers outside of all courtrooms, providing gloves and sanitizing wipes in the courtrooms, permitting counsel to make arguments from counsel tables rather than from the lectern, practicing social distancing and limiting the number of persons in courtrooms at the same time, encouraging the use of electronic exhibits, postponing non-essential courthouse visits by large groups of people (e.g., school groups), and redoubling our already-vigilant efforts to maintain clean and disinfected courtrooms, common areas and restrooms.

Just as the coronavirus pandemic has presented challenges to our Court, so too will the process of resuming normal Court operations. But I want everyone to know that our judges, our Court administrators, our Court Security Officers, and our Court staff take the coronavirus threat seriously and that we are committed to ensuring that the courthouse is a safe place for all. Our Coronavirus Strategic Committee continues to meet regularly and to advise the Court on changing public health guidance. Rest assured

that we are closely monitoring developments in the fight to contain the spread of the virus and we are prepared to act quickly as circumstances dictate. Counsel, litigants, witnesses, and the public all share an invaluable role in the Court's ability to function, and we are grateful for your assistance and understanding now more than ever.

Larry Alan Burns
Chief Judge