

IN THE TRIAL COURTS OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

In the Matter of:)
)
TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF COURT)
PROCEEDINGS AND RELAXATION OF)
COURT RULES IN RESPONSE TO)
COVID-19 PANDEMIC)
_____)

Presiding Judge
Administrative Order No. 20-02
(Effective May 27, 2020)

ORDER RESUMING NON-JURY CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

This Presiding Judge Administrative Order is the second order outlining how court operations in the Second Judicial District and its four courts—Kotzebue, Nome, Unalakleet, and Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow) will proceed as the State of Alaska moves into the third month of responding to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. The last PJ Administrative Order, No. 20-01 was issued on April 3, 2020.

In a series of recent orders by the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court,¹ it was ordered that:

1. Non-jury criminal and civil proceedings may resume beginning June 1, 2020, subject to any restrictions imposed by the presiding judge;
2. Grand jury proceedings may proceed beginning June 1, 2020. The time limits for Criminal Rule 5(e) will continue to be tolled until July 31, 2020.
3. Jury trials remain suspended until at least July 6, 2020. Rule 45 continues to be tolled during this time and will continue to be tolled for the time necessary to permit an orderly transition and scheduling;
4. All court proceedings shall be conducted with strict adherence to social distancing, face coverings, and other requirements imposed by government health mandates, presiding judge’s orders, and administrative bulletins.

¹ Special Order of the Chief Justice No. 8144, May 11, 2020 (Regarding Grand Jury, Jury Trials, and Non-Jury Proceedings); Special Order of the Chief Justice No. 8148, May 20, 2020 (Regarding Grand Jury Proceedings).

Based on these recent Supreme Court Orders, it is now ordered that the following will govern court proceedings in the Second Judicial District:

1. All hearings will proceed telephonically or through the use of video conferencing.

The Court is mindful that the Kotzebue, Nome, and Utqiagvik communities have had recent cases of COVID-19 and local city and borough governments in the District have issued restrictive hunker down orders. Each of the communities in the District are served by passenger planes that originate from Anchorage and Fairbanks that have had the largest number of COVID-19 cases and the risk posed by this pandemic to the people of the Norton Sound, North Slope, and Northwest Arctic regions continues to be an ongoing concern.

2. Non jury criminal and civil proceedings will resume beginning June 1, 2020.

3. Grand jury proceedings will not resume in June, but will be planned to resume in July 2020. Preliminary hearings may resume in June 2020.

4. Jury trials will not resume in June or July, but will be planned to resume in August 2020. Omnibus and pretrial conference hearings may resume in June 2020.

5. Prior to resuming grand jury and trial proceedings, the presiding judge will issue an administrative order specific to these events and timing.

6. Any person entering the public area of a court building, including the court clerk's office shall follow strict adherence to safety protocols listed above including the wearing of face masks, social distancing, and other health requirements imposed by government health mandates, presiding judge orders, and administrative bulletins.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated this 27th Day of May, 2020 at Kotzebue, Alaska.



PAUL A. ROETMAN
Presiding Judge
Second Judicial District