



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

# NOTICE *from the* CLERK

## Phased Reopening of the Court

The United States District Court for the Central District of California has adopted the Plan for Phased Resumption of Operations (“Reopening Plan”), which consists of three phases: Phase 1 (return of certain staff to the courthouses to prepare for limited in-court hearings); Phase 2 (reopening courthouses for limited in-court hearings); and Phase 3 (resumption of jury trials). Per the gating criteria that was adopted by the Court, local COVID-19 exposure risks in the Central District of California are decreasing, such that the transition of all divisions to Phase 3 of the Court’s Reopening Plan is appropriate at this time. Therefore, the Court announces the following regarding its operations.

Effective April 19, 2021:

### Access to the Courthouses

- All Courthouses of the Central District of California remain open to persons with court business and subject to all posted restrictions.

### Court Hearings

- In-court hearings will be permitted in all matters at the discretion of the assigned judge.
  - Hearings by video or telephonic conference may continue to be held in civil matters at the discretion of the assigned judge.
  - Hearings by video or telephonic conference may continue to be held in certain criminal matters as set forth in Order of the Chief Judge No. 20-043, unless the findings and authorizations in the Order are subsequently terminated.
- For information about how to view or listen to video and telephonic proceedings, please see the [March 19, 2021 Notice from the Clerk](#).

### Jury Trials

- Jury trials will be permitted in civil and criminal cases.
- Southern Division: Since jury summonses were issued starting on March 22, 2021, jury trials will commence in the Southern Division on May 10, 2021.

**All posted notices are also available on the Court’s public website at [www.cacd.uscourts.gov](http://www.cacd.uscourts.gov).**

- Eastern and Western Divisions: Jury summonses will be issued starting on April 19, 2021, and jury trials will commence on June 7, 2021.

### **Mandatory Chambers Copies**

- Until further notice, all district judges and magistrate judges do not require mandatory chambers copies during the pandemic.
- Any judge can require chambers copies in a particular case if desired.

### **COVID-19 Safety Protocols**

- All individuals seeking entry to, or occupying, the United States Courthouses or Probation and Pretrial Services Offices in the Central District of California must wear masks in all spaces, except under certain circumstances during in-court proceedings as noted below.
  - The mask must completely conceal the individual's nose and mouth at all times.
  - Court employees who are alone in a non-public, private office or workspace, which permits at least six feet of physical distance from others, may temporarily remove their masks.
  - Anyone violating this mask requirement will be denied entry by the United States Marshal, his Deputies, or the Court Security Officers. Individuals who are denied entry will be asked to contact the office or courtroom to be visited to explore alternatives to entering the building.
- All individuals occupying the United States Courthouses or Probation and Pretrial Services Offices in the Central District of California must practice physical distancing in all spaces.
  - To practice physical distancing, individuals must stay at least six feet from other people.
  - Exceptions to this physical distancing requirement may be permitted for individuals who reside in the same household and counsel under certain circumstances during in-court proceedings as noted below.
  - Anyone not practicing physical distancing in accordance with these protocols will be instructed to leave the building by the United States Marshal, his Deputies, or the Court Security Officers. Individuals who are instructed to leave will be asked to contact the office or courtroom to be visited to explore alternatives.
- The following protocols are adopted for all in-court proceedings:
  - Everyone in the courtroom must wear a mask. The removal of masks is authorized only as necessary for testifying witnesses, jurors while being questioned individually, and in-court identifications, if permitted by the judge. An individual who is permitted to remove or lower his or her mask will be required to wear a face shield and/or speak from behind a plexiglass barrier and maintain appropriate physical distancing while the individual is not wearing a mask.
  - In-court proceedings must be conducted in a manner that allows for all participants to practice physical distancing. An exception may be permitted for counsel who choose not to physically distance from each other or their clients.

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- In addition to these protocols, see [this document](#) for suggested practices for conducting jury trials during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Court continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic as it evolves and will provide updates concerning the Court's operations as adjustments are made.

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**Kiry K. Gray**  
**District Court Executive/Clerk of Court**  
**April 15, 2021**

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