



news

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COVID-19 exposure leads to limited operations at the El Paso County Judicial Building for at least two weeks

COLORADO SPRINGS – A court staff member working in the El Paso County Judicial Building has tested positive for COVID-19 and was quarantined beginning the afternoon of July 31, 2020. As a result, Chief Judge William Bain, in collaboration with El Paso County Department of Public Health, has decided to limit court operations to essential functions only for at least the next two weeks.

The staff member was not assigned to any jury trials, but worked a criminal docket on July 27, 2020, in Division 15 and a four-hour proceeding on July 29, 2020, in Division 19. Anyone who appeared in Division 15 or 19 on these dates is asked to email 04Administration@judicial.state.co.us for more information and to assist with contact tracing.

“After notifying the El Paso County Department of Public Health Deputy Medical Director Dr. Leon Kelly about the exposure, he instructed us to notify all individuals in the courtrooms where the staff member was present to quarantine for 14 days from date of exposure,” Chief Judge William Bain said. “We are working closely with the Department of Health to gather additional information and to make these contact tracing notifications. To do so most effectively, and in the interest of public safety, all jury trials and most other in-person hearings are now postponed until further notice.”

Chief Judge Bain said that while the Court is focused on making these notifications and determining the scope of the exposure, the Court will continue to offer limited emergency services to include:

- A. Petitions for temporary civil protection orders and permanent protection order hearings subject to paragraph 6(c) of this Order;
- B. Petitions for temporary emergency risk protection orders and hearings on emergency risk protection orders;
- C. Crim. P. Rule 5 advisements for incarcerated persons and initial setting of bail;
- D. Revocation hearings on complaints to revoke probation involving an incarcerated defendant; in light of the recommendation from the El Paso County Department of Health and the fact that

- the El Paso County Sheriff's Office does not have the technological capability to conduct revocation hearings remotely, the Chief Judge finds good cause to reschedule all revocation hearings currently set between August 3, 2020 and August 14, 2020.; such hearings shall be rescheduled for the week of August 17, 2020;
- E. Proceedings necessary to protect the constitutional rights of criminal defendants including bond-related matters and plea agreements for incarcerated individuals; bond will be addressed at the Rule 5 advisement hearing and will not be addressed again until August 17, 2020 or after; in light of the recommendation from the El Paso County Department of Health and the fact that the El Paso County Sheriff's Office does not have the technological capability to conduct audio-video hearings, no plea agreements for in-custody defendants shall be accepted until August 17, 2020 or after;
 - F. Juvenile detention and advisement hearings for juvenile delinquency cases;
 - G. Shelter hearings in dependency and neglect cases;
 - H. Petitions for appointment of an emergency guardian and/or special conservator and hearings related to same;
 - I. Hearings on motions to restrict parenting time and parental abduction prevention;
 - J. Emergency mental health filings and proceedings;
 - K. Other proceedings deemed necessary by the Chief Judge to prevent a substantial risk of imminent financial hardship or imminent risk to the health, safety or welfare of any individual or members of the community.

Information on how to contact the court regarding cases may be found at https://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/County/Index.cfm?County_ID=6.

“We will use this experience to enhance our safety protocols so the community may safely continue to conduct business in El Paso County’s courthouse,” Chief Judge Bain said. “In the meantime, we will continue to practice the safety protocols established by the health department for any necessary in-person hearings.”

El Paso County Public Health recommends that affected individual watch for symptoms of COVID-19 and quarantine for 14 days from their time in court, in addition to making all efforts to avoid interaction with high-risk populations. If people begin experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the agency recommends they seek testing. Information about where to get tested may be found at [Public Health's website](#). People who have questions about their potential exposure or risk may contact the agency’s Communicable Disease program at 719-578-3220.

Additional information regarding COVID-19 can be found at the El Paso County Department of Public Health’s webpage <https://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/>.

This information is provided as an e-mail service of the Colorado State Judicial Department, Office of State Court Administrator, 1300 Broadway, Suite 1200, Denver, CO 80203. To discontinue this service or update your e-mail address, please respond to this message with your name, contact information and any comments.