

PORT ORCHARD MUNICIPAL COURT KITSAP  
COUNTY, WASHINGTON

IN THE MATTER OF

Emergency Response to a  
Threat to Public Health  
(Covid-19)

) ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER  
)

NO. 20-02

**THIS MATTER** comes before the court on the public health emergency in the City of Port Orchard, Kitsap County, State of Washington:

On March 23, 2020, Washington Governor Inslee issued and extended a “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order directing non-essential businesses to close, banning public gatherings, and requiring Washingtonians to stay home except to pursue essential activities. This order has since been extended through at least May 4, 2020.

On April 13, 2020, the Washington Supreme Court issued an emergency order extending the time frames of prior orders through May 4, 2020 and clarifying other court operations.

Pursuant to *State v. Bone-Club*, 128 Wn.2d 254 (1995), the court makes the following findings:

- a. A compelling interest has been demonstrated that requires the court to conduct hearings by video and telephone and to limit the physical public interaction with the parties and court staff by limiting public access to the courtroom to the precise time of the scheduled hearing.
- b. Anyone who objects to the court’s findings related to a specific hearing may attend via telephone, video or in person and address the court on the issue.
- c. The court finds that the means provided for the public to observe and listen to the court hearings is the least restrictive means available for protecting the public, the parties, and the court staff.
- d. The court has weighed the importance of open proceedings against the present health risks and has determined that it is appropriate to defer to the guidance of public health experts during this pandemic. The risk of further spread of COVID-19 and possible infection of court staff and users outweighs the public interest in being able to physically access the courthouse during all business hours at this time.
- e. This order is in place for all matters scheduled now or in the future before the court, until further order of the court. This order will be reconsidered daily as public health data, directives, and advice are issued. This order is narrowly tailored as to address current health risks. No less restrictive alternative is available that will sufficiently protect the health of all present.

**THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

1. All litigants, attorneys, interested parties, and members of the public may attend hearings by video, telephone, or in person. Any requested exception to this court order must be made in writing to the

Judge for consideration. Instructions on how to attend a hearing by phone, video, or in person may be obtained by contacting the clerk at (360) 876-1701 or email at [court@cityofportorchard.us](mailto:court@cityofportorchard.us)

2. The doors to the city building/court shall remain closed to the public, except that at the specific hearing time, a court employee will open the front door to Port Orchard City Hall and allow all interested parties to the scheduled hearings to enter the building and go directly to the Port Orchard Municipal Court courtroom. In addition, the public access doors to City Hall shall be posted with "signs" "(attachment A)" instructing interested parties how to contact the court in the event parties appear late or wish to attend by telephone or video.

3. The court is open for business and clerks may be contacted by telephone, email, fax, and mail. The court website at [www.cityofportorchard.us](http://www.cityofportorchard.us) will be regularly updated with announcements, forms, instructions, and contact information.

This order will continue in full force and effect until terminated. This order may be modified consistent with the Court's continual assessment of the needs of the community as well as the recommendations of public health officials.

DATED \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
JUDGE