

March 13, 2020 Jackson County

Message from Tina Qualls, Trial Court Administrator - Re: COVID-19 Update

In our efforts to maintain court operations as scheduled this email is to update you on what we are doing to protect the members of the public, judges, and staff at the Jackson County Court. Our number one concern is the safety of our staff and judges, and the people coming into our building. The Judicial Department has constitutional and statutory obligations to maintain open courts. Judge Mejia, presiding judge and I have been in contact with Jackson County Health authorities as well as OJD Leadership. The Jackson County Court continues to gather and disseminate timely and accurate information to members of the public, ensure our court is prepared, and closely monitor ongoing developments.

Answers to Commonly Asked Questions:

- The Jackson County Circuit Court is open for business
- The court has increased signage and communication to promote prevention practices, including encouraging people to stay home when they are sick
 - The CDC has listed people in the following categories may be at a higher risk of more serious complications from COVID-19
 - People 60 and older
 - People with underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes
 - People who have weakened immune systems
 - Women who are pregnant
- The court and the Oregon Judicial Department are closely monitoring the emerging situation. This includes regular contact with public health officials and emergency planners.
- The court has business continuity plans to respond to a medical emergency, including an outbreak of illness, should changes in service or procedure be required
- The court staff and facilities maintenance are cleaning all communal areas daily
- ***Any changes in service will be announced on the Jackson County Circuit Court website***

In response to conducting court operations without congregating people in large groups the Jackson County Circuit Court will be implementing the following protocol beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 until April 1, 2020:

- If you are sick or running a fever, please stay home. Call the court or your attorney to reschedule your appearance or request to appear telephonically
- If you have traveled out of the country within the last 14 days to Italy, Iran, South Korea or China and/or live with or have close contact with someone who has traveled to these countries within the last 14 days, please do not enter the courthouse
- If you are in a high risk category you are encouraged to participate telephonically in your court appearance or reschedule your court appearance with the court
- We are requesting that defendants/respondents, petitioners be limited to themselves and their attorney in the courtroom
- We will limit the number of people allowed in a courtroom for the following proceedings: arraignments, probation violations, juvenile court, and pre-trials to 15 people at a time (you must remain in the lobby outside of your designated courtroom until your name is called by the court bailiff to appear before the judge)
- If a member of the bar is sick and/or in a high risk category and must appear for court, please contact the court to set up a video appearance
- A defendants mandatory appearance with their attorney for Monday pre-trials is waived during this time

We thank you for your support and vigilance during these uncertain times. We understand these measures will cause significant disruption and inconvenience but we are acting to preserve the health and safety of everyone. Please continue to check the OJD and Jackson County Circuit Court Website for updates as information is changing quickly.

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Please refer regularly to the OJD website <https://www.courts.oregon.gov/Pages/default.aspx> , and the Jackson County Circuit Court website <https://www.courts.oregon.gov/courts/jackson/Pages/default.aspx> for updates related to COVID-19, as things are changing rapidly.