

Chief Judge, Twelfth Judicial District
**12th JUDICIAL DISTRICT-
COVID-19 ORDER FOR
MATTERS SET THROUGH
August 31, 2020- Amending
CJAO 2020-03**



**CHIEF JUDGE
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
2020-06
Amended 7-28-2020**

On May 5, 2020, Chief Justice Coats issued an Updated Order Regarding the Operation of Colorado State Courts. In his order, the Chief Justice requires all state courts to continue to operate on an emergency basis, “continue the safe conduct of all legal business, whether essential or not,” and that “wherever reasonably feasible, judicial proceedings, regardless of their nature, should continue to be conducted remotely.” Furthermore, he ordered that “no person shall be summoned by state courts to assemble for jury service to begin any time prior to July 6, 2020”. On June 15, 2020, Chief Justice Coats extended his previous order regarding jury service, precluding “any person from being summoned by state courts to assemble for jury service to begin any time prior to August 3, 2020, subject to waiver by the Chief Justice.”

On July 24, 2020, Chief Justice Coats issued an Updated Order Regarding COVID-19 and Operation of Colorado State Courts. The new order states “no person shall be summoned to assemble for jury service in a state court without the authorization of the Chief Judge of the particular judicial district, following his or her determination that the jury pool in question can be safely assembled consistent with applicable executive orders and health directives.” Given the continued increase in the number of reported COVID-19 cases in the San Luis Valley, as well as increased case numbers statewide and nationwide, allowing jury trials at this time does not seem to be in the best interest of the citizens of the 12th Judicial District. Additionally, four of the six courthouses in this district do not have the space necessary to conduct a jury trial in a safe manner, consistent with current health regulations.

However, given the precautions that our district has put into place to help ensure the safety of people who come to the various courthouses, it does seem

appropriate to begin to allow for more in-person hearings. Because in-person hearings involve fewer people coming into the courthouse, those types of hearings can be managed more safely. Therefore, Chief Judge Administrative Order 2020-03 is hereby amended as follows:

1. **Operations:** The Clerks' Offices counters will be open from 8:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday except legal holidays. Clerks will be accessible until 5:00 p.m. each day via telephone or email to address any court related matters.
2. **Court Hearings:** At the discretion of the presiding judicial officer, court proceedings, except for jury trials, may now be conducted in-person. The judicial officer managing the courtroom is responsible to make sure that all parties are complying with existing public health regulations. Judges should consider that, "wherever reasonably feasible, judicial proceedings, regardless of their nature, should continue to be conducted remotely" prior to authorizing in-person hearings.
3. **Jury Trials:** All civil jury trials scheduled between now and August 31, 2020, shall hereby be vacated. The parties in such cases shall contact the judicial officer's staff to reschedule the jury trial. All criminal jury trials scheduled between now and August 31, 2020, will be vacated and continued by judicial officers. The parties in such cases shall contact the appropriate judicial officer's staff to reschedule the jury trial. Judicial officers may request a variance of this order from the Chief Judge.

This Order is Effective Immediately. Dated this 28th day of July 2020.

BY THE COURT:



Michael A. Gonzales
Chief Judge, 12th Judicial District