

# Superior Court of California

## COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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**T. MICHAEL YUEN**  
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**RELEASE DATE:**

May 27, 2020

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **COURT TO RESTORE SERVICES STARTING JUNE 1**

The San Francisco Superior Court is restoring a number of services to its operations on June 1 that were reduced at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the court remained open during the pandemic, the need to follow City and County of San Francisco and Department of Public Health guidelines required the court to reduce a large amount of its operations in order to meet social distancing and other health and safety rules.

However, even with the resumption of many court services, health and safety guidelines remain our top priority. Those guidelines apply to our employees and the public and will impact staffing levels and operations. Please note that the following rules apply to everyone coming to any of our courthouses.

- You must wear a mask or face covering to enter any court facility and during all times you remain inside a courthouse. The court will not provide masks or face coverings.
- If you are sick, please do not come to court. No one who is sick or is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms will be permitted to enter any court facility.
- Please expect longer lines and wait times. The court will follow social distancing requirements inside and outside our facilities and some building access will be limited.
- Please note and adhere to the posted signs regarding social distancing, face coverings and health and safety guidelines. Please wash your hands frequently. Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout the courthouses.

The court encourages you to visit our website at <https://sfsuperiorcourt.org/> to see what services are available before you visit any of our facilities. Beginning on June 1, the following services will be available.

## **CIVIL COURT**

### **Law and Motion**

For motions filed before June 1, 2020, with hearing dates that were vacated by the Court's General Orders, the moving party should meet and confer with opposing counsel to agree upon a proposed hearing date and, if the motion is not already fully briefed, a schedule for the completion of briefing. Once the parties have reached agreement, they should send an email to [calendar302@sftc.org](mailto:calendar302@sftc.org) stating that they have stipulated to a new hearing date and specifying the new date and the date on which the motion originally was scheduled to be heard. Counsel will be notified by email or telephone if their proposed hearing date has been approved. If the date requested is unavailable, another date will be assigned.

For motions filed on or after June 1, 2020, the moving party should confer with all other parties before scheduling and noticing a hearing, and may then e-file and notice the hearing in accordance with Code of Civil Procedure section 1005 or other applicable requirements. The moving party need not obtain a hearing date or reservation number before filing the motion. For all law and motion matters, the court will post tentative rulings and follow the procedures set forth in San Francisco County Superior Court Local Rule 8.3 et seq. All hearings will be conducted remotely by CourtCall or by videoconference. No in-person appearances will be permitted. Ex parte hearings in law and motion matters are held daily at 11:00 a.m. by CourtCall. No later than two (2) hours prior to the hearing, the moving party must efile the moving papers and attach them to an email to the opposing party/counsel addressed to [contestdept302tr@sftc.org](mailto:contestdept302tr@sftc.org) with the subject line, "Ex Parte Application."

A party presenting an ex parte application in the law and motion department for a temporary restraining order, alternative writ, appointment of a receiver, or similar matter must schedule the hearing with the court by sending an email to [calendar302@sftc.org](mailto:calendar302@sftc.org) at least 24 hours in advance of the proposed hearing date.

### **Discovery Department**

Any party who wishes to have a discovery motion heard, whether or not it was previously scheduled for hearing, must confer with all other parties before scheduling and noticing the hearing. The moving party shall file a new or amended notice of motion setting the matter for hearing in accordance with Code of Civil Procedure section 1005 or other applicable requirements.

### **Complex Litigation**

The Complex Litigation Departments will begin scheduling telephonic conferences. For all pending motions prior to June 1, 2020, please continue to file opposition and reply briefs on the previously agreed upon schedule. If counsel need a continuance on their briefing deadlines, they shall meet and confer to adjust any briefing schedules, and then email the court on their agreed upon deadlines. For all Joint CMC statements for CMCs set before June 1, 2020, counsel should continue to meet and confer to prepare the statement and file these statements on the day their hearing would have occurred. Based on the filed statements, the court will set further dates.

### **Records**

The Records Public Viewing Room is closed. Records requests may be mailed or dropped off in the Court's Dropbox in the first-floor lobby. All records request must have a self-addressed stamped envelope for returned paperwork. There are no pick-up options for records requests. Please see the Court's website for additional information and the Court Form to request Records. The Court Clerk's office will be open with limited hours and service.

### **Restraining Orders**

The Court continues to accept applications for civil harassment restraining orders. The Court Clerk's office will be open with limited hours and service, but there is a drop box in the first-floor lobby. If restraining order applications are submitted before 10 a.m., a person will receive a call to come pick up the restraining order the same day after 2:30 p.m. If restraining order paperwork is submitted after 10 a.m., a person will receive a call to pick up the restraining order the next business day.

### **Civil Filings Office**

The Civil Filings Office will reopen on June 8, 2020. When services are restored, the office will re-open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Filers are encouraged to electronically file, mail in their filings or use the drop boxes located in the first-floor lobby. If documents are mailed or put in the drop box, the filer must include copies and a self-addressed stamped envelope to receive returned filings. There are no document pick up boxes located at the Civic Center Courthouse.

### **Civil Courtroom Hearings and Proceedings**

Where possible, courtroom proceedings will proceed via CourtCall or by another videoconferencing application. Please check the Court's website at <https://sfsuperiorcourt.org> for the Court's most recent updates regarding court operations. In addition, please use the Court website's Online Services to access the most recent updates in your case.

### **Small Claims Filings and Hearings**

The Court Clerk's office will reopen on June 8, 2020. When services are restored, the office will re-open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Small Claims filings may be submitted by mail or dropped off in the first-floor lobby drop box. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope and copies for returned filings.

All Small Claims hearings have currently been continued and notices have been mailed with future court hearing dates. To see the latest updates to your previously filed case, please access the court's website online services at <https://sfsuperiorcourt.org>.

### **Alternative Dispute Resolution**

In an effort to limit the number of people entering the courthouse, mediations will be conducted remotely via telephone or videoconference until further notice. See the ADR page on the court's website for more information about the program and the procedure for requesting a mediation: <https://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/divisions/civil/dispute-resolution>.

General Civil Cases (not including Unlawful Detainers): Mandatory settlement conferences (MSCs) conducted by volunteer settlement conference officers will resume being scheduled in advance of the trial date. The Court will attempt to schedule MSCs in as many cases as possible but does not have the capacity to set MSCs in all cases. In an effort to limit the number of people entering the courthouse, MSCs will be conducted remotely via telephone or videoconference until further notice. See Local Rule 5.0 for more information about MSCs.

General Civil Cases (not including Unlawful Detainers): The Voluntary Settlement Conference (VSC) program will continue to operate with some changes. The Court has civil trial judges available to conduct remote settlement conferences. Counsel (and self-represented litigants) should confer with each other and with their clients in advance of trial call and be prepared to advise the Presiding Judge at trial call whether all parties agree to conduct a VSC. Only cases where all parties agree will be considered. The Presiding Judge will select cases based upon availability and will assign the settlement conference judge, date and time for the settlement conference. Settlement conferences will be conducted on Friday mornings the week of trial call, unless notified otherwise. The parties must coordinate the videoconferencing platform. The settlement conference may be conducted telephonically rather than via videoconference at the settlement judge's discretion.

**PROBATE COURT**

The Probate Department has resumed full operations with appropriate modifications.

Modified filing rules will be in place. In trust and estate matters, counsel and self-represented parties who have opted in to e-filing must e-file all papers; courtesy copies must be promptly delivered by mail or in person by depositing the papers in the secure drop box outside Room 103. Self-represented parties in trust and estate matters who have not opted in to e-filing must submit their papers for filing by mail or in person by depositing the papers in the secure drop box outside Room 103 and must include additional copies to allow the clerk to route courtesy copies to Room 202. Counsel and self-represented parties in conservatorship and guardianship proceedings must submit any papers for filing by mail or in person by depositing the papers in the secure drop box outside Room 103 and must include additional copies to allow the clerk to route courtesy copies to Room 202.

Modified hearing rules will also be in place. Most hearings will be conducted by CourtCall or, where available, video. Certain hearings may be conducted in person, but parties are strongly encouraged to appear through CourtCall whenever possible. Petitioning and moving parties must inform all parties entitled to notice of the Probate Department's remote hearing procedures.

The Department will resume holding ex parte calendars on Mondays through Fridays at 10:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Drop-off ex parte petitions will be considered on a rolling basis. The Department will resume scheduling Law & Motion matters for hearing on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., and Fridays at 9:00 a.m. Any party seeking to set a new motion on the Probate Law & Motion calendar may obtain a hearing date and time by sending an email to [probmotiondate@sftc.org](mailto:probmotiondate@sftc.org). The Department will resume trust and estate calendars on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. The Department will resume Guardianship calendars on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. and probate conservatorship calendars on Thursdays at

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9:00 a.m. All trust, estate, guardianship, and probate conservatorship hearings calendared for a date between March 18, 2020 and June 19, 2020, inclusive, were continued for exactly twelve weeks, unless the new date fell on a holiday, in which case the hearing was continued to the subsequent appropriate calendar (e.g., if the presumptive new date fell on Monday, September 7, 2020, the hearing was continued to the next Monday, September 14, 2020). The new dates for hearings are available on the court's electronic register of actions. New petitions will be given hearing dates consistent with calendar availability. LPS and mental health calendars will continue, with in person and remote appearances, as appropriate.

For more information see the current General Order of the Probate and Mental health Division, which is available on the court's website at <https://sfsuperiorcourt.org/divisions/probate>.

**UNIFIED FAMILY COURT**

Beginning June 8, 2020, the Clerks' Offices are open Monday through Friday, (except on holidays) from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., pending further notice.

Drop boxes for Unified Family Court (UFC) are placed outside of each clerk's office in rooms 103, 402 and 101, which can be accessed and utilized Monday through Friday (except on holidays) from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., to avoid waiting in line. The clerks' offices are located at:

- United Family Court Clerk's Office (includes Family Law, Juvenile Dependency and Child Support filings, 400 McAllister Street, Room 402.
- Juvenile Justice Center Clerk's Office, 375 Woodside Avenue, Room 101.

For general updated information related to the Unified Family Court operations, please go to <https://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/divisions/ufc>. Please be advised that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, your case may proceed telephonically, by videoconferencing or by personal appearance in the courtroom. If you personally appear for your case, all UFC courtrooms will follow social distancing guidelines and you will be required to wear a mask or face covering.

Departments 403/404 will continue to post tentative rulings scheduling mediations and hearing dates pursuant to San Francisco County Superior Court Local Rule 11.7(D)(3) and

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California Rules of Court, Rule 3.1308(a)(1). Please go to

<https://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/divisions/ufc/tentative-rulings> for tentative ruling instructions.

All hearings will be conducted telephonically or by video conferencing. In person appearances will be permitted at the discretion of the judicial officer.

Department 405 trials and judicial settlement conferences will be rescheduled following a trial setting conference. All trials will be conducted telephonically or by video conferencing. In person appearances will be permitted at the discretion of the judicial officer.

Departments 406/425 hearings will be conducted telephonically or by video conferencing. In person appearances will be permitted at the discretion of the judicial officer.

Department 3/4 at the Juvenile Justice Center will be conducted telephonically or by video conferencing. In person appearances will be permitted at the discretion of the judicial officer.

Department 416 hearings will be conducted telephonically.

**Courtroom Hours**

- 403/404 Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- 405 Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- 406/425 Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- 416 Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Dept. 3/4 Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**CRIMINAL COURT**

The Criminal Office will reopen on June 8, 2020. When services are restored, the office will re- open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Phone service is currently open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., until further notice. Please call (415) 551-0651 and ask to speak to a clerk.

It is highly recommended that you phone the criminal office as many services are now available over the phone, online or by mail. You may experience long wait times to enter the Hall of Justice and receive in-person service at the windows. The drop box remains available outside of room 101.

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**Traffic**

The Traffic Office will reopen on June 8, 2020. When services are restored, the offices will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Phone service is currently open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., until further notice. Please call (415) 551-8550 and ask to speak to a clerk.

It is highly recommended that you phone the traffic office as many services are now available over the phone, online or by mail. You may experience long waits in to enter the Hall of Justice and to receive in-person service at the windows The drop box remains available outside of room 145.

**Court Collections**

The Court Collections Office will reopen on June 8, 2020. When services are restored, the offices will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Phone service is currently open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., until further notice. Please call (415) 551-0670 and ask to speak to a clerk.

To make a payment on delinquent court-ordered debt, contact Alliance One at (877) 541-8420 or at [WWW.PAYAOI.COM](http://WWW.PAYAOI.COM)

It is highly recommended that you phone the court collection unit as many services are now available over the phone, online or by mail. You may experience long wait times to enter the Hall of Justice and to receive in-person service at the windows. The drop box remains available outside of room 101.

**JURY SERVICE**

Our Court is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment, and will take the following steps to adhere to all public safety and social distancing guidelines. Social distancing guidelines will be followed and smaller number of prospective jurors will be instructed to report on any given day. Those prospective jurors who are not feeling well or who have COVID-19 symptoms, must stay home and should contact Jury Services Office at (415) 551-3608 for further reporting instructions. Face masks are required to enter the Courthouse and shall be worn at all times when inside any courthouse. The Sheriff's Department will monitor the security lines and the Jury Assembly Room to ensure that all prospective jurors are engaging in social distancing. The Court will provide a clean and sanitized Jury Assembly Room, as well as all courtrooms to be used for trials. The Court will work in conjunction with the San Francisco Department of Health to ensure the safety of all prospective jurors.



**ACCESS CENTER**

Self-represented litigants may visit the ACCESS CENTER webpage at <https://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/self-help> for information on telephone assistance, online survey inquiries, and for legal informational materials in the self-help library. These services are currently available and do not require a visit to the courthouse.

Beginning June 2, 2020, the ACCESS Center will provide limited in-person services for triage, brief information and referrals. Window assistance will be available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Civic Center Courthouse in Room 103, Windows 1 and 3. Brief triage services are limited to 40 tickets each Monday, Tuesday and Thursday morning. Individuals must complete an in-person intake in order to receive a ticket to be seen on a first come, first served basis.

All other substantive and procedural information and assistance will be provided off-site by telephone and online inquiries only.

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