

1 SUPERIOR COURT
2 COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
247 West Third Street, Eleventh Floor
3 San Bernardino, CA 92415-0302
4
5
6
7

8 **IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
9 **FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO**
10

11 IN RE:

12 SEPTEMBER 14, 2020
13 IMPLEMENTATION ORDER EXTENDING
14 DATES FOR TRIALS AND PRELIMINARY
15 EXAMINATIONS
16

GENERAL ORDER OF THE
PRESIDING JUDGE

17
18 On March 4, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency
19 in California as a result of COVID-19. On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a
20 national emergency which continues unabated. Since declaring the state of
21 emergency, Governor Newsom and state and county public health officials have
22 issued additional guidelines targeted at limiting the spread of COVID-19.

23 On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order, and the
24 state Public Health Officer issued a Public Health Order, instructing all individuals living
25 in the state to stay home or at their place of residence, except as needed to facilitate
26 authorized, necessary activities or to maintain the continuity of operations of critical
27 infrastructure sectors. Governor Newsom and state public health officials have also
28 prohibited most types of mass gatherings. Federal, state, and local public health

GENERAL ORDER: SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 IMPLEMENTATION ORDER EXTENDING DATES
FOR TRIALS AND PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

1 officials have mandated that persons gathered with individuals who are not members
2 of the same residence must implement social distancing of at least 6 feet between
3 individuals. They have also determined that people over 65 years old, smokers, people
4 with compromised immune systems, and people who have serious chronic medical
5 conditions are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Therefore, they recommend that
6 people at higher risk avoid leaving their homes.

7 In early May Governor Newsom and the state Public Health Officer introduced a
8 Pandemic Resilience Roadmap. On May 7, 2020, the State Public Health Officer
9 announced that statewide data supported the gradual movement of the entire state
10 into Stage 2 of the Pandemic Resilience Roadmap. On May 18, 2020, the Governor
11 outlined a process where counties that met specific criteria could move more quickly
12 than other parts of the state through Stage 2 of modifying the Stay-at-Home order. San
13 Bernardino County availed itself of that process, and on May 23, 2020, the state
14 approved the County's request to reopen businesses in accordance with the Pandemic
15 Resilience Roadmap.

16 Unfortunately, after the state permitted many counties to resume business
17 operations, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the state
18 increased significantly. Initially, the state attempted to address the rapidly escalating
19 number of COVID-19 cases on a county-by county basis. On June 28, 2020, the
20 California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued guidance setting forth the need
21 to close bars and similar establishments in counties that had been on the County
22 Monitoring List, which included counties that showed concerning levels of disease
23 transmission, hospitalizations, insufficient testing, or other critical epidemiological
24 markers, for 14 days. San Bernardino County was included on that list, and it is still
25 included among the list of counties that the state is closely monitoring.

26 On July 1, 2020, CDPH issued guidance specific to counties on the County
27 Monitoring List — including San Bernardino County— requiring closure of the indoor
28 operations of various sectors, including restaurants, wineries, and certain

1 entertainment venues. Despite the state's efforts to manage the continuing escalation
2 of COVID-19 cases on a countywide basis, the numbers continued to rise causing the
3 state Public Health Officer to issue an order on July 13, 2020 mandating statewide
4 closure of some types of businesses, and/or imposing operational restrictions for other
5 types of businesses. On March 17, 2020, when the court restricted its operations due
6 to the pandemic, there were five confirmed COVID-19 cases in San Bernardino
7 County. The court resumed operations on May 29, 2020. However, as of September
8 14, 2020, there have been 50,709 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 832 deaths
9 attributed to COVID-19 in San Bernardino County.

10 The continuous rise in COVID-19 cases has adversely impacted the prison and
11 jail populations. Inmates who may have been exposed to COVID-19 are quarantined;
12 however, the time for conducting preliminary examinations for these in-custody
13 defendants is not tolled. Consequently, the court has experienced challenges in
14 attempting to conduct preliminary examinations for in-custody defendants while they
15 are under quarantine, or when they are released from quarantine near the deadline for
16 the court to conduct their preliminary examinations. Moreover, attempting to conduct
17 preliminary examinations for these inmates in the statutorily mandated timeframes
18 increases the probability of exposing members of the Sheriff's Department, court staff,
19 attorneys, judicial officers, and other inmates.

20 The continuing escalation in the number of COVID-19 cases in San Bernardino
21 County continues to impact the court's ability to provide adequate access to court
22 services and proceedings while it contemporaneously implements appropriate
23 measures to protect the health and safety of judicial officers, court staff, litigants,
24 defendants, and members of the public. The court has found that it continues to be
25 unsafe to conduct in-person proceedings that would require convening large groups of
26 people, including parties, judicial officers, court staff, law enforcement, attorneys,
27 witnesses, jurors, the public, and others.

28 ///

GENERAL ORDER: SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 IMPLEMENTATION ORDER EXTENDING DATES
FOR TRIALS AND PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

1 Now that the court has resumed operations, it is experiencing substantial
2 practical challenges associated with processing cases, scheduling and managing trials
3 and other proceedings, and performing other functions associated with court
4 operations. Despite the court's best planning efforts, due to social distancing and
5 enhanced sanitization requirements, there exists inadequate facility space to convene
6 jurors, and to conduct trials and other proceedings at the pre-pandemic rate of
7 operation. The court is also experiencing challenges with maintaining adequate staff to
8 conduct court operations as staff are unavailable for work due to self-quarantine based
9 on membership in the group that has been identified as being at particularly high risk
10 of contracting COVID-19, caregiving needs for children who out of school, or other
11 reasons associated with this pandemic.

12 For these reasons, the court finds good cause to implement the authority
13 granted to it under California Rule of Court, Rule 10.603; case authority recognizing
14 the court's broad powers to insure the orderly administration of justice (see e.g.,
15 *Walker v Superior Court* (1991) 53 Cal.3d 257, 266-267); Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-
16 Sakauye's March 30, 2020 and April 29, 2020 Statewide Orders; the Chief Justice's
17 September 14, 2020 Emergency Order; and Government Code Section 68115, and
18 HEREBY ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

- 19
- 20 1. In accordance with the Chief Justice's September 14, 2020, Order, the time
21 for conducting criminal trials under Penal Code section 1382 is extended up
22 to an additional 30 days, applicable only to cases in which the original or
23 previously extended statutory deadline otherwise would expire from
24 September 14, 2020 through October 13, 2020, inclusive. The court may
25 conduct a trial at an earlier date, upon a finding of good cause shown, or
26 through the uses of remote technology, when appropriate, and if feasible.

27 ///

28 ///

GENERAL ORDER: SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 IMPLEMENTATION ORDER EXTENDING DATES
FOR TRIALS AND PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

1 2. In accordance with the Chief Justice's March 30, 2020 Statewide Order, the
2 time period provided in section 859b of the Penal Code for the holding of a
3 preliminary examination is extended from 10 court days to not more than 30
4 court days.

5
6 THIS ORDER IS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

7
8
9 Dated: September 14, 2020

10
11
12
13 

14 MICHAEL A. SACHS
15 Presiding Judge of the Superior Court