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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 23, 2020

## Santa Clara County Superior Court Restricts Visitors Entering the Courthouse

*Presiding Judge Deborah A. Ryan orders that only persons  
with court hearings may enter the courthouses at this time*

SAN JOSÉ, California (March 23, 2020): Until further notice, the Court will allow only persons with court hearings to enter the courthouse on the day of their hearing. Parties, witnesses subpoenaed to testify, and their attorneys may enter the courthouses on the day of their hearings; all visitors and observers will be directed to remain outside of the courthouse. No other persons will be permitted entry without good cause.

“The Court is taking additional precautions to promote social distancing guidelines and the safety and well-being of the public, courtroom staff, sheriff's deputies, judicial officers, and those who have essential business at the courthouse,” Presiding Judge Ryan said. “If you do not have a hearing taking place at the Court please do not come to the courthouse during this time.”

**Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should not come to the courthouse.** Instead of coming to Court, customers are strongly encouraged to attend court hearings remotely including the use of CourtCall (**1-888-88-COURT**) to appear telephonically, as permitted by law under California Rules of Court, rule 3.670, whenever possible.

Parties, attorneys, and jurors with questions should email [covid@scscourt.org](mailto:covid@scscourt.org) or call **408-882-2700 (wait for the introductory message to complete, press 8, and then 0)** and provide the following information: name, case number or juror number, current mailing address, telephone number, date, time and location of appearance. Prospective jurors who have received notice to report during the weeks of 3/23 and 3/30 will be excused from service and must not report to Court.

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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA**

**GENERAL ORDER RESTRICTING COURTHOUSE ENTRY  
AND PERMITTING ACCESS TO ONLY THOSE PERSONS  
REQUIRED TO APPEAR IN PERSON AT  
ANY SANTA CLARA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURTHOUSE**

This Court HEREBY FINDS AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Since March 4, 2020, the State of California has been in a State of Emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19.
2. On March 16, 2020, the County of Santa Clara Public Health Officer issued an order directing all individuals living in Santa Clara County to shelter at their place of residence except that they may leave to provide or receive certain essential services or engage in certain essential activities and work for essential businesses and governmental services to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
3. On March 19, 2020, the Governor of California issued an order directing all Californians to shelter in place at their place of residence except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of the federal critical infrastructure sectors to protect public health and ensure the healthcare delivery system is capable of serving all and prioritizing those at the highest risk and vulnerability.

ORDER RESTRICTING ACCESS TO COURTHOUSES  
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4. Essential functions of the Superior Court at this time are limited to proceedings that are required to comply with defendants' constitutional rights, protect the health and safety of parties and address jail population concerns.
5. Protection of public health and safety in connection with the COVID-19 threat has resulted or is expected to result in significant interference with Superior Court services and proceedings.
6. Although the federal Constitution generally precludes closure of substantive courtroom proceedings in criminal cases and California's Code of Civil Procedure section 124 generally precludes closure of substantive courtroom proceedings in civil proceedings, the current COVID-19 crisis resulting in shelter in place orders clearly demonstrates an overriding interest supporting restricting courthouse entry and permitting access to only those persons who are required to appear in person in any Santa Clara County courthouse. Public health and safety would be prejudiced absent such a restriction, which is narrowly tailored to permit only those required to enter the County's courthouses; there is no less restrictive means of achieving this overriding interest. (*NBC Subsidiary (KNBC-TV), Inc. v. Superior Court* (1999) 20 Cal.4th 1178, 1181-1182.)
7. It is therefore ordered that access to any and all courthouses is restricted to those persons required to appear in person for a court hearing. This will generally include and be limited to parties, their attorneys and witnesses subpoenaed to testify. No other persons will be permitted entry without good cause.

THIS ORDER IS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

Dated: March 23, 2020

  
Presiding Judge Deborah A. Ryan

ORDER RESTRICTING ACCESS TO COURTHOUSES  
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