



Press Release

Alaska Court System, 303 K Street, 5th Floor Anchorage, AK 99501

Contacts:

Mara Rabinowitz, Public Information Officer, mrabinowitz@akcourts.us

Stacey Marz, Administrative Director, smarz@akcourts.us

Court Staffing and Priority Proceedings

Anchorage, Alaska (March 17, 2020) - The Alaska Court System is requiring a travel-related self-quarantine for its staff to minimize the spread of the corona virus and to comply with the DHSS travel guidelines [http://dhss.alaska.gov/News/Documents/press/2020/ SOA_03152020_HealthAlert_Travelers.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/News/Documents/press/2020/SOA_03152020_HealthAlert_Travelers.pdf). Court staff and judicial officers who have returned from travel outside of Alaska need to self-quarantine for 14 days from their return date. Quarantine is also required if they have had close contact with household members, family or significant others who traveled outside of Alaska in the last 14 days.

This means that the courts are operating with significantly reduced staffing levels, in addition to the absenteeism caused by the school district closures. The court system is identifying priority and emergency hearings that must occur. See [Presiding Judge Order 847](#) for the Anchorage, Palmer, and Kenai courts. We apologize for the inconvenience that previously scheduled hearings and trials may be postponed with little notice as we work through the staffing issues.

While the courthouses remain open, we encourage the public to not come to the court unless absolutely necessary. We have posted a [Visitor Alert](#) on the entry to courthouses stating people should stay away if they have flu-like symptoms, have traveled outside Alaska, or been directed to self-monitor for the coronavirus by a medical provider. When possible, people should call in for their court hearings and [call their local court](#) for [courtroom phone numbers](#). Court filings should be made by drop-box, mail, and email where authorized.

The Alaska Court System will continue to operate consistent with public health directives to the greatest degree practical. At the same time, the court's essential functions will continue. Throughout this public health emergency, the court will continue to provide access to justice and will ensure the protection of fundamental rights.

We appreciate the public's patience as we all work to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Updates are posted frequently on the court's [COVID-19 Response](#) page, Facebook and Twitter.

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