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8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
9 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 IN RE: } GENERAL ORDER NO. 21-07  
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12 CORONAVIRUS PUBLIC } (Supersedes General Order No. 21-  
EMERGENCY } 06, General Order No. 21-03, and  
13 ORDER CONCERNING PHASED } Order of the Chief Judge No. 20-078)  
14 REOPENING OF THE COURT }  
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16 WHEREAS, the Court has adopted the Plan for Phased Resumption of  
17 Operations (“Reopening Plan”), which consists of three phases: Phase 1 (return of  
18 certain staff to the courthouses to prepare for limited in-court hearings); Phase 2  
19 (reopening courthouses for limited in-court hearings); and Phase 3 (resumption of jury  
20 trials);

21 WHEREAS, the Court has adopted gating criteria designed to assess local  
22 COVID-19 exposure risks based on 14-day trends of facility exposure, community  
23 spread, and community restrictions;

24 WHEREAS, per the gating criteria, local COVID-19 exposure risks in the  
25 Central District of California are decreasing, such that the transition of all divisions to  
26 Phase 3 of the Court’s Reopening Plan is appropriate at this time; and  
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1 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other public  
2 health authorities continue to advise taking precautions to slow the spread of COVID-  
3 19, including recommending that people practice physical distancing and wear masks  
4 in public settings and when around people who do not live in their household;

5 Upon majority vote of the District Judges of the Court, the Court orders as  
6 follows:

- 7 1. All divisions in the Central District of California are in Phase 3 of the  
8 Court's Reopening Plan.
- 9 2. In-court hearings are permitted in all matters at the discretion of the  
10 assigned judge.
  - 11 a. Hearings by video or telephonic conference may continue to  
12 be held in civil matters at the discretion of the assigned  
13 judge.
  - 14 b. Hearings by video or telephonic conference may continue to  
15 be held in certain criminal matters as set forth in Order of the  
16 Chief Judge No. 20-043, unless the findings and  
17 authorizations in the Order are subsequently terminated.
- 18 3. Jury trials are permitted in civil and criminal cases.
  - 19 a. Southern Division: Since jury summonses were issued  
20 starting on March 22, 2021, jury trials will commence on  
21 May 10, 2021.
  - 22 b. Eastern and Western Divisions: Jury summonses will be  
23 issued starting on April 19, 2021, and jury trials will  
24 commence on June 7, 2021.
- 25 4. Due to the constraints on space and resources imposed by COVID-19  
26 safety protocols, a limited number of jury trials will be permitted to  
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1 proceed at a time. The Court's COVID-19 safety protocols are necessary  
2 to protect the health and safety of all trial participants. As a result, the  
3 Court finds that any delays in conducting criminal jury trials that are  
4 attributable to the limitations caused by the Court's COVID-19 safety  
5 protocols serve the ends of justice and outweigh the interests of the public  
6 and the defendants in a speedy trial.

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- 8 5. The United States Courthouses in the Central District of California are  
9 open to individuals with court business and subject to all posted  
10 restrictions.
- 11 6. All individuals seeking entry to, or occupying, the United States  
12 Courthouses or Probation and Pretrial Services Offices in the Central  
13 District of California must wear masks in all spaces, except under certain  
14 circumstances during in-court proceedings as noted below.
- 15 a. The mask must completely conceal the individual's nose and  
16 mouth at all times.
  - 17 b. Court employees who are alone in a non-public, private  
18 office or workspace, which permits at least six feet of  
19 physical distance from others, may temporarily remove their  
20 masks.
  - 21 b. The United States Marshal, his Deputies, and the Court  
22 Security Officers shall enforce this Order and deny entry to  
23 individuals not wearing masks. Individuals who are denied  
24 entry will be asked to contact the office or courtroom to be  
25 visited to explore alternatives to entering the building.
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7. All individuals occupying the United States Courthouses or Probation and Pretrial Services Offices in the Central District of California must practice physical distancing in all spaces.
    - a. To practice physical distancing, individuals must stay at least six feet from other people.
    - b. Exceptions to this physical distancing requirement may be permitted for individuals who reside in the same household and counsel under certain circumstances during in-court proceedings as noted below.
    - c. The United States Marshal, his Deputies, and the Court Security Officers shall enforce this Order and instruct individuals not practicing physical distancing in accordance with this Order to leave the building. Individuals who are instructed to leave will be asked to contact the office or courtroom to be visited to explore alternatives.
  8. To protect public health and safety, the following protocols are adopted for all in-court proceedings:
    - a. Everyone in the courtroom must wear a mask. The removal of masks is authorized only as necessary for testifying witnesses, jurors while being questioned individually, and in-court identifications, if permitted by the judge. An individual who is permitted to remove or lower his or her mask will be required to wear a face shield and/or speak from behind a plexiglass barrier and maintain appropriate physical distancing while the individual is not wearing a mask.

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- b. In-court proceedings must be conducted in a manner that allows for all participants to practice physical distancing. An exception may be permitted for counsel who choose not to physically distance from each other or their clients.
  - c. In addition to these protocols, see [this document](#) for suggested practices for conducting jury trials during the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. Judges will determine when their chambers staff will return to work at the Courthouses during each phase of reopening. The District Court Executive/Clerk of Court will determine when and which Clerk’s Office and Probation and Pretrial Services Office staff will return to the Courthouses during each phase of reopening.

This Order shall take effect on April 19, 2021.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



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CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

*Date of Approval by the Court:* April 14, 2021

*Date of Filing by the Clerk:* April 15, 2021