

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII

IN RE: DISTRICT OF HAWAII
RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**MARCH 15, 2021 TEMPORARY GENERAL ORDER REGARDING
DISTRICT OF HAWAII RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

This Temporary General Order supersedes the Court’s “November 16, 2020 Temporary General Order Regarding District of Hawaii Response to COVID-19 Pandemic” and is effective as of March 15, 2021.

The Court continues to monitor the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the State of Hawaii and the rest of the United States, and has carefully considered the need to protect the public, court employees, jurors, litigants, and counsel from being exposed to the COVID-19 virus. On February 12, 2021, Hawaii Governor David Ige issued an “Eighteenth Proclamation Related to the COVID-19 Emergency.” The Eighteenth Proclamation states, in part, that “COVID-19 continues to endanger the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Hawaii and a response requires the serious attention, effort, and sacrifice of all people in the State to avert unmanageable strains on our healthcare system and other catastrophic impacts to the State.” Further, the City and County of Honolulu has developed a 4-tier system for reopening various sectors of the economy, with Tier 1 being the most restrictive and Tier 4 being the most relaxed. At the time of this Order, the City and County of Honolulu is in Tier 3.

Understanding the need for the court to continue its operations, but also taking into account the threat that COVID-19 poses in the State of Hawaii, with the agreement of all of the judges of the United States District Court for the District of Hawaii, the Court orders as follows:

Mitigation Measures for the Courthouse:

- Beginning March 15, 2021, the courthouse and the Clerk's Office will be open to the public on Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, other than on holidays recognized by the Court.
- All persons entering the courthouse, including but not limited to litigants, attorneys, members of the public, media, vendors, and contractors, shall be required to wear a face mask (without valves) that fully covers the nose and mouth while in all public areas of the courthouse. The three exceptions to this rule are:
 - 1) children too young to wear a face mask;
 - 2) those who cannot wear a face mask due to medical necessity may wear a face shield in lieu of a face mask; and
 - 3) individual judges may permit anyone speaking in a courtroom while court is in session to wear a face shield in lieu of a face mask, or permit a witness to testify behind plexiglass without a face mask or face shield.
- Anyone seeking entry to the courthouse without a face mask will be provided a free face mask at the courthouse entry. Anyone refusing to wear a face mask (or face shield, if permitted) as required by this Order shall be denied entry, or removed from the courthouse, by the United States Marshals Service.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be made available throughout the courthouse, including immediately upon entry and by all elevators.
- Everyone in public areas of the courthouse will be required to maintain social distancing of at least six feet, unless exempted by the Court. For instance, while at the entry pavilion or waiting for an elevator, all visitors are required to maintain at least a six-foot distance from the nearest person. The courtrooms will have chairs clearly designated for use that meet the six-foot distancing requirement.

- Entry to the courthouse will be denied to anyone:
 - 1) who has tested positive for COVID-19, unless asymptomatic for 10 days after receiving the positive test result;
 - 2) who has been in close proximity for more than 15 minutes to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, unless 10 days has passed since the last contact with the positive individual;
 - 3) who is living in the same household with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, unless 20 days have passed since the person tested positive;
 - 4) who has symptoms of a COVID-19 infection, including fever, chills, shortness of breath, unexplained coughing, and new loss of taste or smell; or
 - 5) who is required by the State of Hawaii to be in self-quarantine.

- Any non-courthouse employee entering the courthouse who has been outside of the State of Hawaii during a previous 10-day period is required to provide the Court with written notification that the person intends to enter the courthouse. Notification must be provided as early as possible. This notification requirement includes attorneys (appearing for any purpose) and witnesses, and applies regardless of any State of Hawaii quarantine exemption. Attorneys are responsible to provide notification on behalf of witnesses the attorney intends to bring into the courthouse. Notice must be provided as soon as feasible and sent to the orders email address for the presiding judge. See <https://www.hid.uscourts.gov/contactJudges>. If grand jury is being held, notice regarding any grand jury appearances by an attorney or witness must be sent to Seabright_orders@hid.uscourts.gov. Each presiding judge retains the discretion to prohibit entry to any person based on COVID-19 concerns.

Non-Jury Proceedings:

- In order to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission, the Court will make efforts to minimize traffic in the courthouse. Each presiding district or magistrate judge will determine whether civil matters, including case management matters, settlement conferences, and hearings, will be taken off

calendar pursuant to Local Rule 7.1, or conducted by telephone, Zoom, or in court.

- Each presiding judge will determine how to proceed with non-jury trials.
- At the discretion of the presiding judge, the Court will continue to conduct certain criminal proceedings by telephone or video as permitted by the Court's most current CARES Act Order.
- Certain criminal proceedings that fall outside the Court's most recent CARES Act Order will be conducted in court, if possible.
- If a presiding judge elects to proceed with a hearing by telephone or Zoom, all hearings will be available to members of the public and the media, to the extent permitted and practicable. Specific information will be available on each case's individual docket on PACER, and further instructions can be found on the Court's website. Members of the public and media are strictly prohibited from recording or broadcasting any hearing (whether telephonic or Zoom), in whole or in part, in any fashion. Failure to abide by this restriction may result in sanctions. Further information may be set forth on the Court's website, www.hid.uscourts.gov, and may change from time to time.
- For attorneys, filings will be processed in civil and criminal cases via the CM/ECF electronic system, by mail, in person at the Clerk's Office, or through use of the Court's drop box located outside the courthouse. Further, sealed matters may be filed by email to the Clerk's Office at clerks_orders@hid.uscourts.gov.
- For pro se litigants, in addition to filing by mail, in person at the Clerk's Office, or using the Court's drop box, filings may be made by email to the Clerk's Office at hid_clerks@hid.uscourts.gov. File-stamped copies will be returned by United States mail or email. Anyone seeking assistance from the Clerk's Office should call (808) 541-1890. Additional procedures for filing court documents can be found on the Court's website at the COVID-19 information page at www.hid.uscourts.gov/covid.

- Beginning on March 15, 2021, parties are again required to provide mandatory chambers copies as required by Local Rule 10.3. Mandatory Chambers Copies may be mailed as permitted by Local Rule 10.3(c)(2).

Jury Proceedings:

- Given the size of the courthouse and the District Court's courtrooms, and the need for parties, counsel, paralegals, interpreters, court staff, and jurors to maintain the required six-foot social distancing throughout any trial, certain multi-plaintiff or multi-defendant cases cannot be conducted safely. Until further notice and in the interest of safety, the Court will thus limit the number of counsel and parties that can be in a courtroom during a trial. Each case will be considered on an individualized basis, taking into account the number of participants involved, the anticipated length of the trial, and any other relevant considerations.
- The Court further finds that multiple jury trials cannot safely be conducted simultaneously on the fourth floor of the courthouse; that is, only one jury trial can be safely held at a time on the fourth floor.
- The Court understands that the continuance of jury trials has and will continue to cause hardship for all parties. For criminal cases, individual presiding judges will hold trial setting status conferences as required. But before any status conference is held, parties are required to confer to determine if a stipulation can be entered to continue the trial date and toll time under the Speedy Trial Act, which may eliminate the need for a status conference. Each presiding judge will make appropriate findings and enter an order (whether as part of a stipulation or as a standalone order) tolling time under the Speedy Trial Act; that is, each presiding judge will make the individual findings required by the Speedy Trial Act.
- Although the Court will continue to prioritize the resumption of criminal trials, limited civil trials will be able to commence as of April 1, 2021. The Court has designated courtroom 8, which is too small to conduct a criminal jury trial, as its primary civil jury trial courtroom. Given the size of courtroom 8, along with the need to socially distance, only relatively short trials with a limited number of courtroom participants (e.g., lawyers, paralegals, IT staff, or clients) will be able to proceed. The presiding judge

has the discretion to determine if a particular civil case is appropriate for a jury trial in Courtroom 8.

ORDERED ON BEHALF OF THE COURT:

DATED: Honolulu, Hawaii, March 12, 2021.



/s/ J. Michael Seabright
J. Michael Seabright
Chief United States District Judge

In Re District of Hawaii Response to COVID-19 Pandemic; March 15, 2021 Temporary General Order Regarding District of Hawaii Response to COVID-19 Pandemic