**March 24, 2020: Jury Trials Suspended for 60 days**

California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye has ordered that all 58 court trials in the state to suspend all jury trials for two months in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This order also extends the time under which courts have to begin new trials by 60 days. Finally, the order empower courts to enact new emergency rules relating to handling the impact of the pandemic immediately, eliminating the normal 45-day rule for comments on rule changes.

**March 25, 2020: Live Parole Hearings Suspended**

At the state level Governor Newsome issued an order suspending live parole hearings at the prisons and ordering the use of technology for hearings instead. In addition, he has ordered counties not to transport any inmates from county jails to state prisons for 30 days.

**Domestic Violence Temporary Restraining Orders**

Any client who is in need of TRO help in North County or Central should contact (619) 235-5656, X 118 for assistance in English, or 102 for assistance in Spanish. This applies for DV, Elder Abuse, and Civil Harassment TROs. If the client is in need of help in East County, they should contact 619-235-5656, X 122, for both English and Spanish. As of now, all work will be conducted by phone and via email, where possible, but filing TROs will still be possible with our guidance. Our call-in numbers will also be posted on our TRO clinic doors at the courthouses. Unfortunately, we do not provide services for South Bay, as that clinic is run by a different organization.

This is a work in progress but our goal is to help as many people as we can. Please feel free to share this information anywhere you feel it will be helpful.

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| **DA Takes Action Working with Sheriff to Release Some Inmates Awaiting Court Hearings from Custody, Reduce Vulnerable Jail Population**    In the wake of an unprecedented Superior Court closure, the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office and San Diego County Sheriff’s Department took several proactive steps to address the threat of the coronavirus to individuals being held in local jails, including putting policies in place that promote the release of individuals arrested for low-level, non-violent crimes who normally would have been released if the court was open or can’t afford to post bail.      Normally, a person must be brought before a judge for arraignment within 48 hours of being arrested, not counting weekends or holidays.  Given the current court closure, people unable to afford bail could potentially be in custody for a much longer time. In response, cases involving people in custody are continuing to be reviewed within statutory timelines.  If no charges are going to be filed, the jail is quickly notified by the District Attorney so they can release the person (if that individual has nothing else keeping them in custody).  If charges *are* going to be filed, the District Attorney is working with the Sheriff and the Court on an “electronic pre-arraignment review” to identify individuals whose charges are eligible for immediate release or bail reduction.    During this time of national emergency and pandemic, the public safety partners of the County, which include the Sheriff's Department, District Attorney, and San Diego City Attorney— with input from the Public Defender and permission from the Superior Court— are working to release certain inmates from custody and modify the criteria for those booked by the Sheriff’s Department into custody.      Other actions being taken by the District Attorney include:    •    Identifying individuals in jail who are awaiting a trial or sentencing and may be eligible and suitable for release.    •    Working with the Sheriff’s Department to prioritize the release of vulnerable inmates where appropriate. The DA is reviewing inmates who are medically fragile and vulnerable to determine if it’s appropriate to ask the court to re-sentence them.    •    Supporting the option of the Sheriff’s Department applying accelerated credits to inmates serving local prison sentences for non-violent and non-sex related offenses, allowing some people nearing the end of their sentence to be released early.    The DA’s Office is also temporarily modifying how it is charging cases. In some instances, it is reviewing in-custody, non-violent cases but not immediately filing criminal charges with the court. Instead, some individuals will be given a date to return for arraignment several months in the future. The DA is also evaluating other strategies to mitigate the risks of this epidemic and preserve precious resources.    “People aren’t going to get a free pass if they commit a crime. The DA team along with our law enforcement partners are working hard to protect the public from the additional harm that crime causes.    The District Attorney’s [Victim Services Division](https://www.sdcda.org/helping/victims/victim-services.html) is working to support crime victims and provide a variety of services, including providing the required notifications under Marsy’s Law.    The San Diego County Superior Court Presiding and Supervising Judges have also taken extraordinary measures to obtain input from the District Attorney, Public Defender and others in order to implement best practices during this unprecedented crisis. In many cases prosecutors cannot act unilaterally to release people once their custody status has been determined by a judge. By law, the court needs to participate, agree and sign such orders. |
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