

# PRESS RELEASE



## *SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF IMPERIAL*

El Centro, California – The Imperial County Superior Court began implementation of its “Restoration of Full Services Plan” several months ago when the COVID infection rates had dropped significantly from the Spring and early Summer. The plan contained six phases and we are currently in Phase 2. However, due to the recent increase in COVID rates, the Court will move from Phase 2 to Phase 1. Therefore, effective December 9, 2020, Family Law, Family Support, and Traffic matters will be remote only (with case specific exceptions by individual judges). Small Claims cases will be continued into January and will not be heard at this time. Notices are being sent out regarding these changes. The Court will continue to hear certain Civil matters, Probates, Guardianships, and Conservatorships in their respectively assigned courtrooms. The Court will continue to monitor the situation and, if necessary, move out of Phase 1 as well.

Attorneys should contact the Court at [court@imperial.courts.ca.gov](mailto:court@imperial.courts.ca.gov) to obtain passwords for Go-To-Meeting appearances. Court Call will still be available for all Civil matters. Attorneys are encouraged to have their clients appear remotely as well. There will be kiosks available at the courthouses for parties who cannot appear remotely on their own and for Criminal cases in which defendants have been ordered to appear at the Court.

The Court will continue to conduct Criminal jury trials. The District Attorney, on behalf of the People of the State of California, and defendants have statutory and constitutional rights to have hearings and trials in courtrooms where witnesses can be questioned and confronted. The Court has conducted several jury trials over the past several months and has taken and will continue to take safety precautions to do its utmost to ensure the safety of the attorneys, litigants, witnesses, and staff. In fact, the Court has been complimented by many jurors and others who have entered our courthouses on the significant safety protocols in place to protect all who enter.

The Imperial County Superior Court will continue to provide as much access to justice as is humanly possible during these unusual times. This Court has not closed to the public during the pandemic and will not close. Courts are considered essential services and are here to conduct hearings to protect the public and guarantee constitutional rights to defendants who are presumed innocent until proven guilty; to hold hearings in Juvenile cases that effect the safety of children and their rights as well as the rights of parents; to conduct Family Law hearings that involve the rights of parents and children; and to conduct as many other types of cases as we can to ensure access to justice to the residents of Imperial County.

The Court’s safety protocols can be found on our website at <https://imperial.courts.ca.gov/>.