



**DUE TO THE SHELTER IN PLACE ORDER ISSUED BY GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM, THE TULARE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT IS SUBSTANTIALLY CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC FROM MARCH 23, 2020, THROUGH JUNE 9, 2020.**

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE SEE BELOW:**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**NO COURT HEARINGS DURING THAT TIME:** In order to protect the public and court staff, most court hearings will not be held in Tulare County during the closure period. All hearings will be postponed and you will receive written notification of your new court date. If there are temporary orders in place, those orders will also be continued until your new court date (for example, restraining orders, temporary custody orders, etc.).

**EXTENSION OF TIME TO FILE AN ANSWER OR RESPONSE:** The Court has issued an emergency order that extends the time limit for filing documents by considering all days between March 23, 2020 and June 9, 2020, as holidays, which would not be counted for your deadline. (For example, if you were served on March 23 and your response would normally be due thirty days later, on April 23, you would not have to count March 23-May 12 [total of 51 days] as part of the 30 days. Your filing deadline would be extended to May 13.

**HOW TO FILE DOCUMENTS DURING CLOSURE:** During this emergency, the Court and clerk's office strongly discourage bringing paper filing documents to the court, and would direct persons to e-file documents (initial filings), since it is safer and less likely to pass on viruses. The office will also be operating with greatly reduced staff; so we ask that you wait to file until after June 9, if possible. For urgent or emergency documents that can only be filed in paper, you may submit your documents by mail to: 221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 201, Visalia, California 93291, for north county filings and 300 E. Olive Avenue, Porterville, California, 93257 for south county filings. A drop box is also available in the Visalia Division outside of Room 201 on the second floor, or at the South County Justice Center, exterior window number 2.

## MORE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE:

If you need to complete legal paperwork, you can get forms and information at [www.courts.ca.gov](http://www.courts.ca.gov).

The Self-Help Resource Center is not available for in-person assistance, but are available by phone, 559-737-5500, Monday through Friday during the hours of 8:00 a.m., and 4:00 p.m. and via email at [tcscselfhelpinfo@tulare.courts.ca.gov](mailto:tcscselfhelpinfo@tulare.courts.ca.gov). If you are unable to reach someone, leave a message with your name, telephone number, case number and specific question.

If you have general questions, please look at the Self-Help section of the California Courts website, which provides excellent information on most legal topics, including guidance on necessary forms.

You can also obtain assistance in completing forms at [www.SHARPCourts.org](http://www.SHARPCourts.org) under “Online Resources”.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **CRIMINAL**

The Visalia Courthouse, South County Justice Center and Juvenile Justice Center will be closed through June 9, 2020 with the exception of hearing essential matters.

All out of custody matters scheduled to be heard between March 23 and June 9, 2020 will be continued to a new date. Court orders are being mailed to individuals who have hearings scheduled between March 23 and June 9 to notify those individuals of the new dates. Information regarding new hearing dates may also be obtained by checking the court website. Updates to the website will occur on a regular basis.

**Q: WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE A COURT DATE THAT IS BETWEEN MARCH 23 AND JUNE 9?**

**A:** If you have an attorney, contact your attorney to find out your new court date. Do not come to court. Check your mail to learn your new court date. Check the court website on the day of your currently scheduled hearing or days after your currently scheduled hearing to find your new court date.

**Q: WHAT IF I WANT TO PUT MY MATTER ON CALENDAR BETWEEN MARCH 23 AND JUNE 9?**

**A:** You will not be able to obtain walk-in court dates during this time period. The windows will be closed. You may contact the court after June 9 to obtain a new court date.

**Q: WHAT IF I HAVE A JURY TRIAL OR OTHER HEARING BETWEEN MARCH 23 AND JUNE 9?**

**A:** If you have an attorney, contact your attorney to find out your new court date. Do not come to court. Check your mail to learn your new court date. Check the court website on the day of your currently scheduled hearing or days after your currently scheduled hearing to find your new court date.

### **JUVENILE**

The Juvenile Court will be essentially closed for any out of custody hearings through June 9, 2020.

With limited exception, all matters scheduled to be heard between March 23 and June 9 will be continued to a new date. Out of court orders are being mailed to individuals who have First Appearances scheduled between March 23 and June 9 to notify those individuals of the new dates.

**Q: WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE A JUVENILE COURT DATE THAT IS BETWEEN MARCH 23 AND JUNE 9?**

**A:** Contact your attorney to find out your new court date. If you/your child do not have an attorney, call the Juvenile Probation Department to find out your new court date. Do not come to court. Check your mail to learn your new court date.

**Q: WHAT IF I HAVE A JURISDICTIONAL OR OTHER HEARING BETWEEN MARCH 23 AND JUNE 9?**

**A:** Contact your attorney to find out your new court date. Do not come to court. Check your mail to learn your new court date.

**Q: MAY I STILL ATTEND COURT IF MY YOUTH IS DETAINED AND HIS/HER/THEIR CASE IS BEING HEARD?**

**A:** One parent will be allowed to enter the courthouse lobby and the courtroom for each detained youth whose case is being heard. Additional family members that come to court will not be able to enter the lobby or courtroom; parents should avoid bringing additional children (siblings) to court.

### **TRAFFIC**

**Q: HOW DO I PAY FOR MY FINE IF THE COURT IS CLOSED?**

**A:** To pay your fine when the Court is closed, you may pay online at [www.tularesuperiorcourt.ca.gov](http://www.tularesuperiorcourt.ca.gov) or mail payments to 221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 124 Visalia, California 93291 or via drop box located at Room 124 on the first floor of the

Visalia Division. A drop box for payments is also available at the South County Justice Center, exterior service window number 2.

**Q: I PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED A COURTESY NOTICE FROM THE COURT FOR A HEARING THAT IS SET DURING THE TIME THE COURT IS CLOSED, WHAT DO I DO?**

**A:** All traffic matter hearings that are scheduled for the period of March 23, 2020 through June 9, 2020 are being postponed. You will be receiving a notice in the mail as to the new court hearing date and time.

**Q: I HAVE A TRIAL SET FOR MY CITATION AND THE COURT IS CLOSED, WHAT WILL HAPPEN?**

**A:** All traffic matter hearings that are scheduled for the period of March 23, 2020 through June 9, 2020 are being postponed. You will be receiving a notice in the mail as to the new court trial date and time.

**Q: I RECEIVED A TRAFFIC CITATION AND MY DUE DATE FOR PAYMENT IS DURING THE TIME THE COURT IS CLOSED AND I NEED AN EXTENSION FOR THE PAYMENT, WHAT DO I DO?**

**A:** During the period of March 23, 2020 through June 9, 2020, if you need an extension for the payment of your fine, you may write to the Court and submit your written request for an extension. Mail to the Traffic Division at 221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 124, Visalia, California 93291 or Traffic Division at 300 E Olive Ave., Porterville, CA 93257. The Court will process the request and mail its decision and order to you.

**Q: I HAVE BEEN LAID OFF AND CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY THE TRAFFIC CITATION, WHAT CAN I DO?**

**A:** If you cannot pay your traffic citation and/or are facing a hardship and you would like to request a monthly installment payment plan or consideration for a fine reduction, you may download the Request for Determination to Pay Form (TR-182) form from the court's website or use the online tool on the court's website. For paper requests, complete, sign and attach any supporting documents to the application and submit your form by mail to the Traffic Division at 221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 124, Visalia, California 93291.

**Q: I NEED AN EXTENSION TO SUBMIT MY PROOF OF CORRECTION AND THE COURT IS CLOSED WHAT DO I DO?**

**A:** During the period of March 23, 2020 through June 9, 2020, if you need to submit a proof of correction, mail to the Traffic Division at 221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 124, Visalia, California 93291 or Traffic Division at 300 E Olive Ave., Porterville, CA 93257.

## **FAMILY**

Tulare County courthouses are substantially closed through June 9, 2020. At this time, no hearings will be held during the closure. All matters set during this time will be continued and you will receive a Notice at the address the court has on file.

**Q: HOW DO I FILE A REQUEST FOR A RESTRAINING ORDER IF THE CLERK'S OFFICE IS CLOSED?**

A: Documents may be submitted electronically (initial filing only), by mail or via drop box located at both the Visalia Division and South County Justice Center. Documents may also be submitted via facsimile at 559-737-4547.

**Q: HOW DO I FILE OTHER LEGAL DOCUMENTS IF I HAVE NO ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC FILING AND THE COURT IS CLOSED?**

A: If it impossible for you to file documents electronically, mail or drop box is the alternative. However, there will likely be significant delay due to shelter in place orders requiring the Court to operate with reduced staff. We also ask you to wait until after June 9 if possible. Our mailing address is Tulare County Superior Court, 221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 201, Visalia, CA 93291. or Civil Division at 300 E Olive Ave., Porterville, CA 93257. Drop boxes are available 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

If you need to complete legal paperwork, you can get forms and information at <http://www.courts.ca.gov> You can also use a free program to assist you in completing forms at [www.SHARPCourts.org](http://www.SHARPCourts.org). Documents may be submitted electronically, by mail or via drop box. There will likely be a delay in processing documents due to shelter in place orders requiring court to operate with reduced staff. If possible, we ask that you wait until after June 9.

**Q: HOW DO I SCHEDULE MEDIATION OR CHILD CUSTODY RECOMMENDING COUNSELING FOR CHILD CUSTODY AND VISITATION IF ORDERED BY THE COURT?**

A: If you already have an appointment scheduled, Family Services Center (FCS) is in the process of rescheduling existing mediation appointments as soon as practical and will be contacting you with a new date. No new appointments will be scheduled at this time.

**Q: IF MY CHILD AND/OR I MUST SHELTER IN PLACE, HOW DO I COMPLY WITH CHILD CUSTODY AND VISITATION ORDERS?**

A: Unfortunately, that is a legal question as to whether your situation involves an exception to shelter in place orders issued by the County or State. Since the Court is prohibited from giving legal advice, you may wish to seek legal advice or contact the authority issuing the shelter in place order for guidance.

However, the Court always encourages parties to meet and confer in an attempt to resolve areas of potential dispute. (If there is no court order restraining contact). The best interests of children should be paramount in this public health crisis and we encourage all to try to reach agreement, if you can, on any modifications of visitation plans needed to ensure the safety of children and their parents in compliance with shelter in place orders. If an agreement is reached, written stipulations can be filed and submitted to the Court for approval.

If an agreement cannot be reached, parties may file a Request for Order asking the Court to modify custody and visitation plans; however, there may be a delay in processing documents. Parties are encouraged to wait until after June 9 to file.

**Q: VISITATION WITH MY CHILD MUST BE SUPERVISED BY A PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISOR, AND I WAS NOTIFIED BY THE SUPERVISOR THEY WERE UNABLE TO PROVIDE SUPERVISION DUE TO THE SHELTER IN PLACE ORDERS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

**A:** As in the answer to the preceding question, you may wish to seek legal advice which we cannot give. It is up to each provider to evaluate whether they can provide services that are safe to the child and parties. Some providers have decided they are unable to safely provide these services in this crisis. Others have determined they can safely provide services in their situation. Again, as in the preceding question, parties are encouraged to meet and confer if no order prevents that. Possible agreements include: Stipulating to a different professional provider. Stipulating to a non-professional supervisor such as relative or close friend with whom both parents and the child are comfortable.

**FURTHER QUESTIONS:**

The Court's Self Help Center staff will be operating remotely, by telephone and email, during our closure period. Please email questions to [tcscselfhelpinfo@tulare.courts.ca.gov](mailto:tcscselfhelpinfo@tulare.courts.ca.gov), or call 559-737-5500. Self Help Center staff will also be operating on reduced hours and staff, so it may take a few days for someone to get back to you.

**CIVIL**

**Q: HOW IS CIVIL BEING AFFECTED BY COVID-19?**

**A:** Tulare County Superior Court is closed from March 23, 2020 through June 9, 2020. In an effort to protect the public and court staff, no court hearings will be held in Tulare County during the closure period. Most hearings will be set out between 30 and 60 days from your current date. You should receive notice of your new date in the mail. You are welcome to check the website for new dates, which are in the process of being reviewed and set.

## **PROBATE**

All probate hearings set March 23 through June 9 have been rescheduled and the parties will be notified. Parties may continue to file documents electronically during this period of court closure. Any matters filed during this time that require urgent court attention will be set; non-urgent matters will be calendared on the next available date.

All temporary orders set to expire during the Court's closure through June 9 will be extended by order of the court. Parties will receive a copy of the order by mail.

## **RESTRAINING ORDERS**

**Q: WHAT ARE RESTRAINING ORDERS?**

**A:** A restraining order is one way to protect yourself from physical, emotional or financial abuse, and property destruction. There are different kinds of restraining orders available through the court system. Each has different eligibility requirements, and some are limited in the relief that they can provide.

**Domestic Violence Restraining Order**  
**Elder or Dependent Adult Restraining Order**  
**Civil Harassment Restraining Order**  
**Workplace Violence Restraining Order**

**Q: WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDER?**

**A:** An EPO is a type of restraining order that only law enforcement can ask for by calling a judge. Judges are available to issue EPOs 24 hours a day. So, a police officer that answers a domestic violence call can ask a judge for an emergency protective order at any time of the day or night.

The emergency protective order starts right away and can last up to 7 days or as determined by the judge. The judge can order the abusive person to leave the home and stay away from the victim and any children for up to a week. That gives the victim of the abuse enough time to go to court to file for a temporary restraining order.

To get an order that lasts longer than an EPO, you must ask the court for a temporary restraining order (also called a "TRO")

**Q: WHAT IS A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER (TRO) AND HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?**

**A:** If a TRO is issued, it will expire at the first hearing date unless extended. When you go to court for the hearing that was scheduled with your TRO, the judge may issue a "permanent" restraining order which can last up to 5 years.

**Q: HOW DO I FILE A REQUEST FOR A RESTRAINING ORDER IF THE CLERK'S OFFICE IS CLOSED?**

**A:** We ask that all legal documents be filed electronically (initial filing only) when possible. Documents will also be accepted via first class mail and drop box and both the Visalia and South County Justice Center locations.

**Q: I WAS JUST SERVED WITH A TRO. HOW DO I RESPOND?**

**A:** First, read the TRO papers carefully and comply with every order made by the judge. Failure to abide by the orders is a crime and you could be arrested and charged. You may file an answer to the restraining order request, explaining your side of the story. If you prefer, you can wait until you attend the hearing to tell your side of the story.

You may also contact our Self-Help Center.

### **JURY**

**Q: I WAS SUMMOND FOR JURY DUTY ON A DATE THE COURT IS CLOSED. MUST I APPEAR?**

**A:** The Chief Justice of California has issued an order suspending all jury trials for a period of sixty (60) days. If you received a summons to appear during the court's closure period, you are not required to appear. Your name will be returned to the pool of jurors and you may receive a summons at a future date.