



Supreme Court of New Mexico

CHIEF JUSTICE
JUDITH K. NAKAMURA
JUSTICES
BARBARA J. VIGIL
MICHAEL E. VIGIL
C. SHANNON BACON
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March 20, 2020

Dear Members of the New Mexico State Bar,

Since I wrote to you last week, the Supreme Court has continued to work closely with the Governor's office and the New Mexico Department of Health and has implemented a number of additional measures to ensure the continued operation of our courts in a manner that protects public health. These measures are set forth in detail in three Supreme Court Orders which were issued on March 17 and 18, 2020. The orders can be found on the New Mexico Courts' website as well as the State Bar's website and I encourage you to monitor both websites regularly.

The measures we have implemented are designed to reduce the number of people in our courthouses and minimize the risk to those who need to use the essential services our courts provide. For example,

- Courts are adopting local procedures for accepting filings by fax and email from self-represented litigants;
- Attorneys may now email or fax pleadings in those case-types that are not currently eligible for e-filing through our File and Serve system.
- All judges now have the discretion to authorize telephonic or audiovisual attendance for court appearances upon motion of the party or on the court's own motion. To that end, judges and court staff have received training on how to use Google Hangout/Meet and the training video is available to the public on our website.

We are taking every precaution we can to ensure our courts are safe and remain open, but we cannot do it alone. We need your help.

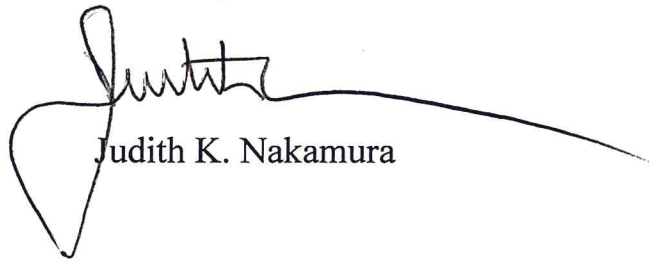
First, if you have a fever, a cough, have traveled to a high-risk area in the last 14 days, or been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 **do not enter a courthouse**. Second, help us keep our courthouses safe by asking your clients and

witnesses these same questions. Third, please continue to follow all relevant rules when requesting to appear by phone or video or when seeking a continuance. Additionally, you may want to consider whether a hearing is necessary; perhaps the matter could be decided on the pleadings. Finally, if you have specific concerns about a particular court or judge's practices, please contact the judicial district's court executive officer so that your concerns can be addressed as quickly as possible.

New Mexico attorneys have always been proud of our close-knit and collegial bar. We need to draw upon that cooperative spirit, now more than ever, to ensure that New Mexicans continue to have safe access to their courts.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judith", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right and a large loop on the left side.

Judith K. Nakamura