



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8 **UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT**  
9 **CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**  
10

11 **IN RE: PROCEDURES FOR**  
12 **PHASED REOPENING DURING**  
13 **COVID-19 PUBLIC EMERGENCY**

**GENERAL ORDER 20-04**

14 Upon consideration of the continuation of the Continuity of Operations Plan  
15 (“COOP”) implemented on March 18, 2020, in response to the ongoing COVID-19  
16 pandemic, and in light of the reopening of the courthouses in the district under  
17 the Plan for Phased Resumption of Operations of the United States District Court,

18 **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** as follows:

- 19 1. Intake Areas of Bankruptcy Court May Open. All Intake areas of the United  
20 States Bankruptcy Court will be open to accept in-person filings.
- 21 a. Face Coverings. Anyone not wearing a face covering without  
22 an approved medical exemption or anyone not observing posted  
23 social distancing rules may be refused service.
- 24 b. Public Computers and Electronic Kiosks. At the discretion of the Clerk  
25 of Court, public computers and electronic kiosks may be disabled  
26 until methods can be developed to reduce any spread of infection  
27 through their use.  
28

1 c. Cash Payments. Cash will not be accepted for filing or copying fees  
2 unless an exception is made by the Clerk of Court.

3 2. In-Person Hearings. As physical access to the United States Bankruptcy  
4 Court is now permitted, individual judges assigned to cases may hold matters  
5 in person in the courtroom or continue to hear matters remotely through  
6 telephonic or by video service.

7 a. Remote Access. Through December 31, 2020, remote access to  
8 all non-evidentiary hearings will be permitted, even where in-person  
9 hearings are held.

10 b. Evidentiary Hearings and Trials. The requirement to appear in person  
11 or remotely for evidentiary hearings and trials will be determined on  
12 a case-by-case basis by the assigned judge. Specific concerns should  
13 be brought to the attention of the assigned judge.

14 c. Face Coverings. Unless the person has a medical exemption,  
15 face coverings are required in public areas and also when entering  
16 a courtroom. The presiding judge will determine whether face  
17 coverings may be removed in the courtroom.

18 3. Self-Represented Filings. Individuals filing bankruptcy without an attorney  
19 may file in person, by mail, or through the court's Electronic Self-  
20 Representation module. The rules for such filings are posted on the court's  
21 website. (<https://www.cacb.uscourts.gov/filing-without-an-attorney>)

22 4. Mediations. Mediations may resume and are in the discretion of the mediator  
23 as to whether to proceed in-person or remotely.

24 5. Judges' or Courtesy Copies. Except for documents over 25 pages, including  
25 exhibits, the requirement to deliver judges' copies of documents to chambers  
26 (LBR 5005-2(d)) continues to be temporarily suspended – including delivery  
27 via U.S. mail, personal delivery, or any other means. Documents over  
28 25 pages should still be provided unless the judge's specific updated

1 instructions have waived that requirement. Parties are reminded that  
2 the judge and chambers' staff do not receive electronic notices of filings,  
3 and therefore, (a) for documents that are filed late, and (b) for matters that  
4 are either (i) not set for hearing, or (ii) not the subject of an electronically  
5 uploaded order (LOU), parties must contact the chambers of the presiding  
6 judge and advise chambers of the filing.

7 6. Signatures. Local Bankruptcy Rule 9011-1 does not require in person contact  
8 as it permits an attorney to receive a signature page by electronic means.  
9 Nothing in the rule precludes the filing of a signature page that has been  
10 received by facsimile, pdf, text or photo. This signature can be filed  
11 separately in whatever format is reasonably possible so that there is a clear  
12 indication that the signor has read and is signing the actual document filed.

13 a. In light of the difficulty of obtaining any paper files during  
14 this emergency, the requirement of LBR 9011-1(d) to maintain  
15 a wet signature for 5 years is temporarily suspended and the attorney  
16 should maintain the electronic transmission of the client to file  
17 the document in whatever format is reasonable at this time.

18 b. If there is a situation where a client cannot transmit a signature  
19 electronically either due to lack of required technology or internet  
20 access, etc., the attorney should so explain the circumstances  
21 with the filing, verify that permission was obtained from the client  
22 to sign the document on their behalf, and obtain the signature  
23 as soon as possible after the filing through another means.


24 7. Phased Reopening Plans. The court's COOP will remain in place and  
25 be modified gradually as necessary. Details of these modifications will be  
26 posted on the court's website and communicated to staff as they are  
27 implemented.

28

1 a. Individual Courthouses May Be Closed. Should local suspected  
2 or confirmed cases of COVID-19 or local, state and federal guidance  
3 change, individual bankruptcy court divisions may be closed without  
4 further order in the discretion of the Chief Bankruptcy Judge  
5 after appropriate consultation. Signs will be posted on the doors  
6 of the division affected and directions provided for obtaining needed  
7 court services. No further orders will be issued for such temporary  
8 closures made pursuant to the ongoing COOP.

9  
10 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

11  
12 DATED: June 30, 2020

13  
14   
15 **Maureen A. Tighe**  
16 Chief Judge, United States Bankruptcy Court