

Dear clients:

We are writing today to ensure you are informed about various court closures amid the ongoing COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, as well as ongoing operations at the Worthington Law Centre.

As you may know, each of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties (our primary areas of practice) have issued some version of a “shelter in place order.” If you are a resident of one of those counties, we encourage you to review the regulations yourself. We will not offer any advice on how those regulations apply to you, your life, or your business. We do, however, know how they apply to us. Monterey County’s “shelter in place” order partially exempts law firms so they can continue to provide essential services, as well as to maintain business value and basic business functioning. We interpret that as allowing minimum personnel in the office to continue work on cases. As such, at least one of Tom, Brian, or Karen Worthington will be physically in the office most weekdays during normal business hours. Should you need to come to the office for an essential function or to meet with one of us, please call in advance to schedule an appointment. We ask that you limit the attendees to the meeting only to those people absolutely necessary. We also ask that you wait in your vehicle until the appointed time so that we can limit the number of people in our office at a given time. Finally, we ask that you observe social distancing while in the office—this means we will not be shaking hands and we will be sitting as far apart from one another as possible while in our conference room. We wish we did not have to impose these measures, but we believe they are required under the order, as well as being best practices to avoid continued spread of COVID-19. We of course remain completely available by phone, email, or video conference and we encourage clients and their families to communicate with us as necessary.

All others aside from Tom, Brian, and Karen are on mandatory work from home directives, but their work will continue. You may reach any of Charlie, Christina, Chester, Bertha, or Brenda by phone or email. They are continuing to work full time and fulfilling all business functions—they just are not physically sitting in the office. Please do not hesitate to contact any of them if they can assist you in any way.

We want to reassure you that while courts are closed and our physical office is essentially closed, your cases are not closed. Our work continues. Your vigorous defense continues. Although you may see less of us for the next few weeks, we will not forget about you and we will not stop working in your best interests to bring your matters to a speedy and just resolution.

Finally, the most up to date information we have on court closures is as follows:

Monterey County: Court is closed *through* April 3, 2020. The only matters that will be heard are felony in-custody and juvenile matters. We do not yet know to when all other matters will be rescheduled. If you have a court appearance between now and April 3, we will reach out to you individually as soon as we have a new court date for you. You should also check your mail and your text messages for communication directly from the Court.

San Benito County: Court is closed *through* May 4, 2020. It appears the only matters that will be heard are in-custody matters, as well as felony pretrial conferences, preliminary hearings, and both misdemeanor and felony jury trials. If you have a court appearance between now and May 4, we will reach out to you individually as soon as we have a new court date for you.

Santa Cruz County: All criminal cases scheduled are still being heard, as far as we know. The Court is implementing measures to keep most people out of courtrooms, but they are not rescheduling matters yet. We will update you further when and if we receive additional information.

We appreciate everyone's understanding and patience during this difficult and uncertain time. We know that the uncertainty over what the future holds is one of the more difficult parts of being charged with a crime. We try to be sensitive to this every day. We will be even more sensitive as this situation unfolds. We will communicate with you as clearly and frequently as we can. Thank you for continuing to trust us with your defense. And please stay safe and healthy.