

A NOTE FROM KITSAP COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

April 21, 2020

Greetings,

As you know, over the past few weeks we have been conducting mandatory and emergency hearings using the Zoom video conferencing platform. By and large, I have heard positive feedback about how things are going using Zoom. While I am not aware of any problems regarding security breaches with any of our hearings, there has been much publicized information about those concerns. I have attached a couple of articles I read recently that discuss both the security issues related to Zoom and the notion that the COVID-19 pandemic is requiring courts to adopt technology that may have previously been met with some reluctance...even in Germany. Change is difficult, but necessary.

As it stands now, Kitsap County Superior Court has the ability to conduct hearings remotely using equipment in three courtrooms. That is insufficient to handle the regular and recurring calendars that we normally have. We need to maximize flexibility, comply with the open courts doctrine and insure that we can handle the many matters that have been tabled due to the pandemic, all the while continuing to adhere to social distancing standards.

Kitsap County Superior Court is in the process of obtaining both the necessary equipment and additional Zoom licenses to expand our video conferencing capabilities. The increase in equipment and licenses will allow us to conduct hearings via Zoom in five courtrooms as well as using Zoom for settlement conferences. Ultimately our goal is to have all seven courtrooms compatible for handling hearings remotely. [As you might expect, some of the necessary equipment is not easy to come by at the moment. Demand is extremely high.] Court Administrator Frank Maiocco and Office Support Coordinator Jessica Robison are working diligently to obtain the new equipment and additional Zoom licenses.

We are doing this with the mindset that when we move into conducting regular calendars and settlement conferences, social distancing standards will remain with us. The transition has been described as a dial and not a light switch. Going back to our jam-packed, elbow-to-elbow seating arrangements in our courtrooms (especially on Friday mornings) is not a viable option in the foreseeable future.

On behalf of Kitsap County Superior Court, I want to sincerely thank you all for your patience and willingness to work with us. It is very much appreciated.

More anon, Kevin

Kevin Hull, Presiding Judge
Kitsap County Superior Court
Department 6



Attachments:

[Zoom Security](#)

[Courtroom Technology](#)

[Emergency Administrative Order 2020-3](#)