



Administrative Office of the Courts

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New Mexico courts implement additional precautions during COVID-19 public health emergency

SANTA FE – Additional restrictions and public health precautions at New Mexico courthouses were ordered today by the state Supreme Court to guard against the spread of COVID-19.

“Courts recognize that extraordinary steps are necessary to protect public safety and the health of New Mexicans. Our courts must continue to provide essential services in the justice system,” said Chief Justice Judith K. Nakamura.

Under the Supreme Court’s order:

- While limits on “mass gatherings” established by the state public health order do not apply to courthouses because courts provide essential services, courts will limit the number of people to no more than 15 in courtrooms and other locations inside a courthouse to promote social distancing recommended by public health officials. Previously, the restriction was 25 or fewer people.
- Judges must conduct audio and video teleconferencing for civil and criminal proceedings, except when an emergency requires in-person appearances. This lessens the need for attorneys and litigants to appear in-person at courthouses. Courts are using Google Meet to facilitate teleconferencing because users can access the free service by creating a Google email account. Since the state declared a public health emergency, judges and litigants have been encouraged to use teleconferencing when possible.

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