



AMANDA TOSTE
Court Executive Officer

Superior Court of California, County of Merced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 1, 2022

Merced Superior Court Modifies Operations

On March 17, 2020, the Merced Superior Court (Court) announced its plan to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19, which included a number of court operational changes. On March 21, 2020 the Court announced further operational changes. Court administration has been carefully monitoring the advice of public, state and federal health officials regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The Court is modifying its operations.

The goal of the Merced Superior Court during this unprecedented situation is to protect the safety, health and welfare of court customers, jurors and staff. To this end, we request that individuals refrain from visiting the Court whenever possible.

The Clerk's Offices remain open for all filings Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Exception: Merced Traffic is open 7:30 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. Please see the clerk's office notice on the Court's website www.merced.courts.ca.gov for detailed hours and drop box locations.

Telephone hours are from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. Drop-box filings are processed throughout the day. Exception: Merced Traffic will answer telephones from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm Monday – Friday.

Court operations will continue with remote appearances strongly encouraged. Entry to court facilities are subject to screening requirements.

Effective April 4, 2022:

1. Only parties and attorneys required to appear in a court hearing, unless otherwise ordered or permitted, will be allowed to enter the court facilities on the day of the hearing.
2. Seating is available for in-person observations of criminal jury trials and preliminary hearings.
3. All persons entering the court facilities shall wear a face covering or face mask while in any Merced Court facility unless otherwise ordered by a judicial officer. The face

covering or face mask must follow the California Department of Public Health guidelines. Neck gaiter style and single layer face coverings are not permitted.

4. Those not permitted to enter the court facilities should contact their attorney or the clerk's office if not represented by an attorney.
5. Do not come to the court if you are ill and experiencing flu-like symptoms or have a fever or cough. Do not come to the court if you have a scheduled appointment for COVID testing, have tested positive or likely have COVID-19. Do not come to the court if you've been exposed to someone who has tested positive or are in quarantine. If you are represented by an attorney, please contact your attorney prior to coming to court to determine whether you need to appear in person. In most instances, your attorney can appear for you. If you do not have an attorney, you may contact the Clerk's Offices listed below. Telephones are answered Monday - Friday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. The Merced Traffic office answers telephones Monday - Friday from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
 - Civil Office (including Juvenile Dependency) – (209) 725-4111
 - Criminal Office – (209) 725-4113
 - Family Law Office – (209) 725-4117
 - Juvenile Delinquency – (209) 725-4119
 - Los Banos – (209) 725-4124
 - Traffic Office – (209) 725-4107
6. Remote appearances are strongly encouraged, and may be required in some proceedings, to prevent exposure to and the spread of COVID-19. See the "Remote Appearances" tab at www.merced.courts.ca.gov for more information.

Operations Update

Civil Operations (including Juvenile Dependency) – (209) 725-4111

- Clerk's Office hours: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday - Friday
- Courtroom 8 combined with Courtroom 10 (Unlimited Civil, Juvenile Dependency and Probate) will continue with hearings as scheduled in Courtroom 10. Remote appearances are encouraged and may be required in some proceedings. See the "Remote Appearances Tab" on the website www.merced.courts.ca.gov for more information.
- Courtroom 9 - Limited Civil and Small Claims hearings will continue as scheduled. Remote appearances are encouraged and may be required in some proceedings. See the "Remote Appearances Tab" on the website www.merced.courts.ca.gov for more information.

Criminal Operations – (209) 725-4113

- Clerk's Office hours: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday – Friday
- Courtrooms 1, 2, 3 and 6 –Felony/Specialty Criminal calendars will continue as scheduled.
- Courtrooms 4 and 5 – Misdemeanor calendars will continue as scheduled.

Family Law Operations – (209) 725-4117

- Clerk's Office hours: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday - Friday
- Courtroom 7 – Family Law calendars will be heard in-person unless the party and/or their attorney notify the Court of their intention to appear remotely. See the "Remote Appearances Tab" on the website www.merced.courts.ca.gov for more information.
- Courtroom 4 – DCSS and DV calendars will continue to be heard as scheduled.
- Family Court Services - Child Custody Recommending Counseling will remain remote unless otherwise scheduled.

Juvenile Delinquency Operations – (209) 725-4119

- Clerk's Office hours: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday - Friday
- Courtroom 11 – Juvenile Delinquency calendars remain as scheduled at Juvenile Hall. Remote appearances are encouraged and may be required in some proceedings. See the "Remote Appearances Tab" on the website www.merced.courts.ca.gov for more information.

Los Banos Courthouse Operations – (209) 725-4124

- Clerk's Office hours: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday - Friday
- Telephone hours: 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday - Friday
- Online payments can be made on the Court's website at www.merced.courts.ca.gov.
- Courtroom 12 - Remote appearances are encouraged and may be required in some proceedings. See the "Remote Appearances Tab" on the website www.merced.courts.ca.gov for more information. A limited number of individuals who appear at the courthouse may be permitted to use the courthouse terminals to participate in remote hearings.
- Courtroom 13 Family Law matters (every 2nd and 4th Tuesday). Family Law calendars will be heard in-person unless the party and/or their attorney notify the Court of their intention to appear remotely see the "Remote Appearances Tab" at www.merced.courts.ca.gov for more information.

Merced Collections – (209) 725-4220

- Clerk's Office hours: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday – Friday. Exception: Collections located in Traffic will be open from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm Monday – Friday
- Telephone hours: 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday - Friday
- Online payments can be made on the Court's website at www.merced.courts.ca.gov

Traffic Operations – Merced: (209) 725-4107

- Clerk's Office hours: 7:30 am – 3:00 pm Monday - Friday
- Telephone hours: 7:30 am – 3:00 pm, Monday-Friday
- Courtroom 9 - Hearings will continue as scheduled. Individuals may contact the Clerk's Office to schedule arraignment hearings and provide contact information for telephonic appearances.
- Online payments can be made on the Court's website at www.merced.courts.ca.gov

Jury Service – (209) 725-4121

- Hours of operation: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Jury service will continue. Be assured that we are working with the County Health Department to ensure your safety. The court has installed hand sanitizing stations throughout the facilities. Additional precautionary measures include batching smaller reporting groups and staggering the reporting times to allow for entry screening.

Self Help Center – Remote Services Available

- Center is closed for walk-in services
- Service is available via telephone Monday - Friday: 8:00 am – 12:00 pm at (209) 725-4168
- Telephone appointments are available Monday - Friday: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm
- Email assistance is available at selfhelp@mercedcourt.org or smallclaims.advisor@mercedcourt.org

The Court remains committed to serving the people of Merced County and while the above measures may result in inconvenience, the Court's overriding responsibility is to the health and safety of jurors, litigants, courthouse visitors, attorneys, justice partners and court staff. These measures are being taken to exercise the precautions necessary to maintain the safety and welfare of those who visit the courthouse during the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the patience and understanding of the public and our justice partners during these challenging times.

###