

Family Law Courts & the **NEW** COVID Universe

The world as we knew it changed in March 2020. During that time in history, everything shut down, including the courts. COVID was raging, and there were no protections from the fast-moving virus or even an understanding of how this terrible disease functioned.

Since then, vaccines, healthcare treatments, social distancing and masks have all contributed to where we find ourselves today: Businesses and the courts are beginning to reopen but with new methods of functioning.

At the end of March 2022, California's emergency COVID orders, which limited physical access to the courts, will expire. A new assembly bill will take its place, enabling parties to continue appearing remotely in family law matters.

The last two years have shown that remote court hearings made the courts work more efficiently and produced a record-high attendance rate. The unexpected consequences of shifting to a remote hearing platform greatly improved the public's access to the legal process.

Contra Costa County courts will continue to use a Zoom platform for video court appearances. Alameda County will make BlueJeans available for their virtual family law court appearances.

Another significant change this year is mandatory e-filing. The system streamlines access to the courts and processes pleadings more effectively.

Although positive changes have been implemented due to the COVID crisis,

participating in family law cases remains a complex universe. Courts are understaffed and overworked, delaying many cases. If you have a family law matter, securing an experienced attorney enhances your ability to handle the challenges a family law litigant encounters.



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