

# Attorneys persevere despite court closures, trial delays

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*While many workers self-quarantine at home, lawyers work harder than ever to keep the wheels of justice turning for their clients while courthouses are dark.*

LOS ANGELES, CA, USA, April 22, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A downtown personal injury attorney schedules surgeries himself for clients suffering orthopedic injuries.



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*Neema Rahmani*

A westside lawyer sets Zoom conferences for sunrise so her clients' children don't miss home schooling.

And in the South Bay, a litigator eeks out a disability discrimination jury verdict against Wells Fargo as courthouse doors slam shut across the state.

While many workers self-quarantine at home watching Netflix and learning to bake, the state's attorneys say they're only working harder and finding creative ways to keep the wheels of justice turning during a surreal time of dark courthouses and wholesale releases of inmates.

"The courts might be mostly comatose until Thanksgiving, but many of our clients don't have the luxury of waiting that long to get medical care and pay their bills, so we're doing everything imaginable, and some things you wouldn't imagine, to bridge the gap," says personal injury lawyer [Neema Rahmani](#), co-founder of West Coast Trial Lawyers. "Yes, it's more work but good litigators are supposed to be resourceful in the face of adversity, so we are rising to the occasion."

The California court system's response to the coronavirus pandemic has profoundly altered the way many local attorneys conduct their practice. Courthouses and office buildings may be closed, but lawyers continue to work for their clients using revised outreach and communication methods.

Although the courts have not completely shut down, they have considerably scaled down their operations and are handling only essential and emergency matters. Any proceeding that requires a gathering of multiple people, such as a jury or grand jury, is suspended.

While attorneys are adapting their methods in the face of the coronavirus threat, litigants in civil matters should still expect their cases to move forward with a usual pace until trial. Starting dates are currently being continued three to six months.

On April 6, the state Judicial Council, which sets policy for California courts, ordered several temporary emergency measures, including limiting evictions and judicial foreclosures, eliminating bail for certain criminal defendants, and remotely conducting pretrial hearings. The Judicial Council's measures are due to end 90 days after Gov. Gavin Newsom's March 4 emergency declaration expires, whenever state officials deem the coronavirus threat is over.

Prosecution of traffic and non-traffic citations has generally been suspended throughout the state. Presiding Judge Kevin C. Brazile of Los Angeles County Superior Court announced a 90-day

suspension of the collection of traffic and non-traffic citation prosecutions.

Even a partial shutdown of the court system, however brief, can be costly for people involved in the legal system, says South Bay civil litigator [Victor L. George](#).

"For me it's heartbreaking, because we've canceled jury trials, which have all been kicked down the road for later when it's safe for the courthouses to reopen," says George, who is doing everything remotely, including meeting new clients, mediations and depositions.

George won what may have been the last jury trial in the Los Angeles courts for the foreseeable future. His client was awarded a half-million dollar verdict after being fired by her employer, Wells Fargo, over a medical disability issue.

"Our jurors hung in there under extraordinary circumstances," George says. "Justice delayed is justice denied. I try a lot of cases. People need access to the courts, including trials. It's not good to have the jury system close for a while."

Rahmani said he continues to advocate for clients in every possible way, even if it is not related to legal filings and trial arguments. For injured clients in dire need of orthopedic surgeries for injuries to spines, shoulders or knees, Rahmani convinced their physicians to schedule procedures while most doctors and hospitals were canceling surgeries as they prepared for an onslaught of COVID-19 cases.

[Christa Ramey](#) of Ramey Law PC, who represents victims of school bullying, says she is scheduling "meetings" with clients before usual business hours so the discussions don't interfere with home-schooling.

"When we talk to clients on the phone, we are doing it from our cell phones. We conduct our initial client meetings through a Zoom platform or Facetime. Online is not ideal, but it is working so far."

Until a coronavirus vaccine is available, Ramey says, "I believe working remotely will be the new normal."

Once the country gets the go-ahead to resume business, "courts will probably get back up and running very quickly, likely in a matter of days," says Rahmani. "The more difficult issue will be contacting potential jurors and getting them to report to jury duty. That process will take weeks or months."

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