IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE

ORDER NO. 8210

Update regarding COVID-19 and Jury Trials

Order No. 8202 allowed misdemeanor trials to resume on November 2, 2020 under the direction of the presiding judge. But since that order, case counts across the state have continued to escalate. In response, the presiding judges have recently entered orders suspending jury trials and in-person grand jury proceedings in many locations. On November 12, Governor Dunleavy issued an emergency alert requiring all executive branch employees to work from home whenever feasible and urging other organizations that can operate remotely to allow their employees to work from home. To support this alert, the court system can suspend some proceedings that must be conducted in person and require court proceedings to be conducted remotely whenever possible. Therefore, under the authority of Supreme Court Order No. 1957,

IT IS ORDERED:

1. All jury trials are suspended until at least January 4, 2021. This suspension does not apply to trials (such as presumptive death trials) in which videoconference proceedings have been approved. As ordered previously, the period of delay from March 16, 2020 through January 4, 2021 is excluded in computing the time for trial under Alaska Criminal Rule 45(d).

2. All in-person grand jury proceedings are suspended until at least January 4, 2021. The time limit for preliminary examination under Alaska Criminal Rule 5(e) is extended through January 4, 2021.

3. All other court proceedings shall be conducted by teleconference or videoconference whenever possible.

4. The presiding judge may allow a jury trial or grand jury proceeding in exceptional circumstances.

DATED: November 13, 2020

Joel H. Bolger
Chief Justice

Distribution:
Supreme Court Justices
Presiding Judges
Area Court Administrators
Administrative Director
Clerk of the Appellate Courts