

Chief Justice Rabner Signs Second Omnibus Order Resuming Certain NJ Court Operations & Extending Deadlines

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, New Jersey state courts have conducted more than 12,000 remote court events involving more than 80,000 participants since transitioning to virtual operations. Based on that success and the increasing technological capabilities of court staff, counsel, and litigants, New Jersey Chief Justice Stuart Rabner issued a Second Omnibus Order on April 24, 2020, to resume certain court operations through video and phone conferencing.

Under the Order, in-person court appearances will be permitted only in emergency situations. Virtual depositions are also encouraged, with court reporters presently authorized to administer oaths remotely.

Numerous deadlines under the Court Rules have been further extended through May 31, 2020. The extension of time periods to provide many discovery responses, however, shall conclude on May 10, 2020, due to the demonstrated ability of the bar and the court system to continue litigation consistent with regular timeframes.

Notwithstanding the judiciary's best efforts to remain open for official business, jury trials and hearings inhospitable to virtual proceedings are two essential court functions that cannot proceed in compliance with social distancing guidelines. Therefore, the backlog of civil trials will continue to grow and the resolution of thousands of civil cases, especially the complicated matters requiring prolonged trials, will remain distant. Litigants who prefer an expeditious resolution of their case, or who dislike the insecurity associated with protracted litigation, will be compelled to rely on mediation or arbitration to promptly resolve their claims.

A summary of the Chief Justice's Order is provided below:

Court Proceedings

Deadlines

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