

# News Release



New Jersey Courts

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## **Chief Justice Rabner Suspends New Jury Trials in Response to Coronavirus**

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner today announced New Jersey courts will suspend all new jury trials until further notice to help minimize community exposure to COVID-19 coronavirus.

The action, effective immediately, is one of a series of measures the Judiciary is taking in consultation with the state Department of Health to balance the seriousness of the pandemic with the court's mission to provide critical services to the public. Jury trials already in progress will continue. Grand juries will continue pending further communication with county prosecutors and the attorney general.

“Effective immediately, the Judiciary is suspending jury service for new trials,” Chief Justice Stuart Rabner announced. “While jury trials are a critical component of our justice system, this extraordinary step is necessary to protect the health and safety of the community. At the same time, we will make every effort to keep our court system running in the face of this health crisis.”

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy issued a statement in support of the Judiciary's action.

“After consultation with the Commissioner of Health, today I recommended the cancellation of all public gatherings of more than 250 individuals to mitigate the spread of COVID-19,” said Governor Murphy. “We are in full support of the Judiciary's response to this public health emergency.”

As announced Monday in an order from Chief Justice Rabner, the Judiciary has been preparing for a potential move to virtual and telephonic proceedings for all non-jury matters.

“It is imperative that we take action to avoid large public gatherings at our court facilities. At the same time, we will leverage our technological capabilities so that other court proceedings can continue with minimal disruption to our justice system,” said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts.

Court vicinages will take immediate steps to stagger schedules for landlord/tenant, small claims, and other non-jury court proceedings to avoid bringing together large numbers of people in confined areas.

The Judiciary also announced it will take the following steps:

- Preparing to conduct motions, non-jury trials, and certain hearings remotely, with the use of video and telephonic equipment.
- All out-of-state work travel by Judiciary staff has been suspended.
- Discretionary training that does not impact the functions of staff has been suspended.
- Non-essential events, such as student tours, are cancelled.
- Conferences and committee meetings are being held via video.

Jurors with questions about the order should contact their [local jury manager](#).

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