

# ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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## CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR SHUTDOWN OF JUDICIARY OPERATIONS [June 30, 2006]

If a new state budget is not adopted by the Legislature and signed by the Governor by midnight on Friday, June 30, 2006, and the Governor declares a shutdown of state government, the Judiciary will be without funds to operate and will be obligated to shut down its operations. We are hopeful that, as in the past, a budget will be adopted and operations will continue uninterrupted. We must, however, plan for the contingency that a budget might not be adopted by the deadline. In that event, the following steps will be undertaken for an orderly shutdown of the courts.

This contingency plan will be shared with all judges and judiciary staff prior to Monday, July 3 by distribution to the Assignment Judges/Presiding Judges and senior management, as well as a posting on the Judiciary's web site ([www.njcourtsonline.com](http://www.njcourtsonline.com)) and the Judiciary's InfoNet.

1. **Closings.** The Supreme Court, the Superior Courts, the Appellate Division, the Tax Court, and all supporting operations of the state courts will be closed. Those courts and court offices will not be open to the public. In the event of a shutdown, staff and judges (with limited exceptions as noted below) will be notified not to report to work on Monday, July 3, 2006 and on subsequent days as necessary. Municipal courts and Surrogates' Offices will remain open.
2. **Emergent matters.** Emergent court matters will be handled by the judges in each vicinage designated to hear such matters. Emergent duty judges will use such staff as they deem necessary for handling those limited emergent matters, with the approval of the Assignment Judge. Emergency matters would include but not be limited to medical emergencies, setting initial bail, detention orders and telephonic detention reviews, orders of involuntary commitment, and other matters within the discretion of the judge.
3. **Child support.** Preparation and timely distribution of child support checks requires a cooperative effort between the Judiciary and the Executive Branch. The Executive Branch will provide the staff necessary to complete its portion of the work; therefore, the Judiciary will also make necessary staff available to complete the process.

4. **Domestic violence.** Individuals seeking temporary restraining orders in domestic violence cases will be required to seek such relief from the appropriate Municipal Court.
5. **Statutes of limitations.** For those days that the courts are closed because of this shutdown, the Chief Justice will issue an order tolling the running of any statutes of limitations or any time periods set by the Rules of Court.
6. **Computer Operations and Protection of Databases.** The Administrative Director of the Courts will designate a limited number of staff at the central office to report to work during the shutdown for the purpose of preserving the integrity of the Judiciary's computer system and databases and providing access to essential services remaining in operation.
7. **Other Essential Support Services.** The Administrative Director of the Courts will designate a limited number of staff at the central office and in the vicinages to report to work during the shutdown to ensure support for essential operations.
8. **Notification to the public and employees.** Information as to whether the state courts actually are closed on July 3 will be announced pursuant to existing procedures for notification of the public and court employees regarding court closings, which will include announcements on local radio stations and prominent posting of a notice on the Judiciary's web site ([www.njcourtsonline.com](http://www.njcourtsonline.com)). Those announcements will be made/posted either before July 3 or as early that day as is possible. Additionally, Judiciary staff will be notified of such closure through existing emergency notification plans (e.g., telephone calling trees and lists). Employees unfamiliar with their local notification plans should check with their immediate supervisors. These notification procedures will be repeated for each day of the shutdown.
9. **Distribution of this Contingency Plan.** Copies of this contingency plan will be distributed to the Governor, the Attorney General, the State Public Defender, the Commissioner of Human Services, the Commissioner of Personnel, the Commissioner of Corrections, the State Treasurer, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the General Assembly, collective bargaining representatives of Judiciary employees, the President and Executive Director of the New Jersey State Bar Association, and the municipal courts. The Assignment Judges will distribute copies of this Plan to the County Prosecutors, Regional Public Defenders, Sheriffs, Surrogates, County Clerks, county jails, and county bar associations.

June 30, 2006