



KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
516 Third Avenue, W-116  
Seattle, WA 98104

Mitzi G. Johanknecht  
*Sheriff*

March 17, 2020

James Rogers  
Presiding Judge  
King County Superior Court  
516 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Temporary Suspension of Civil Evictions

Dear Judge Rogers,

As we continue to evaluate the resources of the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) and plan for significant increases in COVID-19 cases, I have decided that some of our normal assignments and workload must be revised. One temporary change to our workload is the redeployment of deputies in our Civil Unit, which normally handles civil evictions within King County. During this extraordinary time, I am temporarily suspending the service and enforcement of evictions until further notice.

It is imperative that we maintain the health of our commissioned personnel so that they can respond to all emergency calls that require our response, including those posing an imminent threat to the physical safety of our residents. We have made many changes in our agency to attempt to promote social distancing and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the KCSO and I believe this decision is in keeping with such changes. Civil evictions can result in situations where deputies risk exposure to the virus because they are not able to maintain social distancing while they are facilitating physical eviction of tenants and their possessions.

In light of the information and guidance from Public Health and the CDC, I must also anticipate that members of our organization have already been exposed to COVID-19 and that we will soon have members of the KCSO quarantined and unavailable for duty. We must do what we can to maintain staffing levels for urgent emergency response, which includes the need to call out deputies who are currently assigned to the Civil Unit.

This change will become effective today and will remain in effect until we are confident the threat of COVID-19 has dissipated and we have sufficient resources to resume civil evictions.

We understand that the Court intends to still proceed with its assigned caseload and that orders will likely continue to be directed to the Sheriff's Office for evictions throughout King County. Our Civil Unit will maintain all orders relating to eviction for processing when we can safely devote our

resources to this work. I mean no disrespect to the Court in temporarily suspending eviction services and will update the Court when we are in a position to resume implementing the Court's orders on civil evictions. At that time, we can anticipate a backlog while we work through pending eviction orders.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitzi G. Johanknecht". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Mitzi G. Johanknecht  
SHERIFF