



Administrative Office of the Courts

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NM Supreme Court establishes plea deadline before start of trials and jury selection

SANTA FE – The state Supreme Court today issued an order requiring plea and settlement agreements no later than five days before the selection of a jury or the start of a non-jury trial before a judge in a criminal or civil case.

“As our courts are resuming jury trials, this deadline will help protect the health and safety of New Mexicans by eliminating last-minute pleas and settlements after prospective jurors, witnesses, court personnel and other people have gathered in a courthouse anticipating the start of a trial,” Chief Justice Judith K. Nakamura said.

[The plea and settlement deadline](#) becomes effective for cases in which a jury selection or bench trial is scheduled to begin on or after July 1. The deadline will remain in place until the Court withdraws or changes it by issuing a future order.

The Court also issued an [order updating procedures for health screening](#) of all people seeking to enter courthouses. The order reflects the practices that courts have implemented in recent weeks in response to the evolving guidelines and recommendations from public health authorities to help control the spread of COVID-19.

Under the order, anyone wishing to enter a courthouse must undergo a temperature check and answer questions to determine whether they exhibit possible symptoms of COVID-19. People with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will be denied entry into a courthouse or other judicial facility. Courts also will maintain a log of people entering a courthouse, including judges and court employees, to help in contact tracing in the event a court visitor later tests positive for the virus.

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