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To Our Valued Clients:

Since early January, we have been tracking the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation daily, seeking standing guidance and regular updates. We will continue that practice. However, with the disease now established in the US, and, in particular Washington State, we are intensifying our company response.

I write now to share important new policies and guidelines about our business activities that may affect our valued clients. Because they may affect all of us in some way, I ask that everyone take the time to read the new policies, which appear below.

For our staff, the current risk level associated with COVID-19 is low. The majority of them work from home already and are safe from the spread of this virus in our office.

However, global hotspots shift, and the contagion pattern is not well understood. With that uncertainty, we need to make prudent choices to protect the health of our own community and the broader communities we work in, without creating unnecessary disruptions to the normal pursuit of our business activities and your judicial requirements.

This balanced approach led us to the policies below. In shaping them, we've consulted the various state health websites and are carefully monitoring the decisions of the corresponding courts, state officials, client offices and major businesses in order to respond to this fluid situation.

These guidelines represent our best judgment, at this moment, about practical steps we can all take to reduce risk for ourselves and for each other. Where we can safely consider exceptions, we have provided a process for doing so. Beyond that, we ask for everyone's cooperation as we try to choose a sound path for us all.

Since future challenges from COVID-19 could disrupt critical business functions, we are developing contingency plans.

For example, Federal courts in western Washington State last Friday said they are suspending all civil and criminal matters requiring an in-court appearance due to an outbreak there. The order, in effect at least until March 31, does not impact judges' considerations of civil or criminal matters that can be resolved on court filings without oral argument. The courthouses in Seattle and Tacoma remain open.

In this case we will endeavor to work with the courts to ensure that your filings are done within the stipulations provided by the court divisions we are working with which may well now implement electronic filings.

NEW POLICIES AND GUIDELINES ON PROCESS SERVING

The policies below will take effect immediately and stay in place through at least May 15. In this two-month period, we will review them on a rolling basis, provide frequent updates and offer new guidance about activities after May 15 as soon as we can.

Travel Restrictions:

There is some discussion at the State level that restricted local traffic could be implemented, if this is the case, we will need to consider which areas are being quarantined and what our process servers will be allowed to do. Should these circumstances be imposed on civilians then we will be required to suspend serves in the restricted area.

We will do our best to ensure that you are aware of the restricted areas. We will work with our clients and the respective Court Divisions to determine how best and when the Process Servers can re-enter a restricted area.

If we currently have your documents to be served and are unable to serve them due to a travel restriction, we will keep you advised as to when we will be able to affect service.

Documents:

Our standard service includes picking up and dropping off documents where requested.

Clients:

Wherever possible please scan your documents and send to us via email to serve@addisonlegal.com. If it is absolutely necessary, we will pick up your documents using sterile gloves to ensure that all parties are protected from unaware transmissions of the virus.

Defendant Serves:

We will be advising our Process Servers to wear gloves, put the documents into a file folder/envelope and avoid physical contact (hand to hand) with defendants. If we suspect that a defendant is ill or if they refuse to open the door for us because they are afraid of contracting something from a Process Server, we will revert to Drop Serving the documents.

Court Filings:

ADDISON LEGAL SERVICES, LLC provides court filings for Pierce & Thurston County, additionally, we have been asked to file documents in other counties and subsequently serve the documents as instructed.

As already mentioned, we will work with the Court Divisions as to their accessibility; wherever we can file electronically we will do so.

If we are required to visit in-person we will abide by the Court requirements which may include hand sanitizers, gloves, etc. as outlined by that jurisdiction.

Declaration of Service/Subpoenas/Other Document(s):

Washington State allows Affidavit/Declaration of Services to be e-signed and this is our practice for the majority of our clients. For the majority of documents, we have a standard practice of e-signing or signing in blue ink, scanning and having them emailed to our Operations Manager. We have been emailing them to you and this continues as our practice regardless of the Coronavirus issue.

There are some clients who prefer to receive original Affidavit/Declaration of Services signed in blue ink and mailed to them. The results of this effort could put the recipient(s) at risk for the virus if our personnel or anyone else involved in the subsequent mailing processing is unaware that they have the virus. Additionally, it is unknown how the State will handle mail delivery and this could compromise your judicial responsibilities.

For this reason, we ask all our clients to accept the e-signatures or scanned versions of their Affidavit/Declaration of Services during this period. If you wish to resume the original signature after this period, then we would be pleased to do so.

I appreciate your business and working with us during these trying times. Please let me know if you have any questions and/or concerns. These are concerning times and we will overcome it.

Sincerely,



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