

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO


IN RE:

CORONA VIRUS (COVID19) PUBLIC
EMERGENCY

MISC. No. 20-0088 (RAM)

**FIFTEENTH AMENDED ORDER CONTINUING CIVIL
AND CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS**

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and, in the interest of protecting the health and well-being of court employees, members of the bar and the public, the District Court of Puerto Rico ("the Court") hereby issues the following directives effective immediately:

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1. The Court will continue to use its video ("VTC") and/or teleconferencing ("TC") systems to hold eligible civil and criminal proceedings until December 19, 2022.¹ Nonetheless, certain civil and criminal proceedings hearings may be held in person.
 2. The Court finds that in all criminal cases, the ends of justice served by the present Order outweighs the interests of the parties and the public in a speedy trial, and therefore, shall be excluded under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A).
 3. Jury Trials may be held in accordance with the District of Puerto Rico's Third Amended Protocol for In-Person Hearings and Trials.²
 4. Grand Jury proceedings will continue as scheduled.
 5. Jury Qualification proceedings may be held, as needed.
 6. Administration of Oath to Attorneys will continue to be held on a limited basis.
 7. Criminal matters before Magistrate Judges, such as initial appearances, arraignments, detention hearings, and the issuance of search warrants, shall continue to be conducted by VTC with the defendant's consent.

¹ For technical requirements and step-by-step instructions on how to participate in a VTC connection from outside the Court premises, the Court directs counsel to review the "*How to Setup a Video Tele-Conference (VTC) for Virtual Courtroom Proceedings*" instructions in the District Court's Internet website by clicking [here](#).

² See Third Amended Protocol for In-Person Hearings and Trials During COVID 19 Pandemic

In Re. Corona Virus (COVID19) Public Emergency
Page – 2

8. Petty offense Central Violations Bureau hearings shall continue to be held combining the use of VTC systems with in-person appearances.
9. The Clerk's Office Intake and Cashier Area at the Federico Degetau Federal Office Building will continue its regular operational schedule, Monday through Fridays from 8:30AM to 12:00N and 1:00PM to 4:45PM.³
10. Naturalization Ceremonies held by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service may be held in person, or by VTC. In person ceremonies are limited to 40 participants. The Third Amended Protocol for In-Person Hearings and Trials During the COVID 19 Pandemic must be followed.
11. All non-case related events, including but not limited to public tours, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Committee meetings may be held by VTC or in-person at the discretion of the presiding judge.
12. The Court may issue other orders concerning future continuances as necessary and appropriate.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 21st of September 2022.



Raúl M. Arias-Marxuach
Chief United States District Judge

³ See Notice from the Clerk 21-04: Intake Section Hato Rey: Return to Regular Operating Schedule Beginning June 1, 2021.