

News Release



New Jersey Courts

Independence • Integrity • Fairness • Quality Service

STUART RABNER

Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court

For more information contact:

PETER McALEER

MARYANN SPOTO

Office of Communications and Community Relations

609-815-2910

www.njcourts.gov

RICHARD J. HUGHES JUSTICE COMPLEX · P.O. BOX 037 · TRENTON, NJ 08625-0984

For immediate release: **Nov. 16, 2020**

New Jersey Supreme Court Order Suspends Jury Trials Amid Second Wave of COVID-19 Pandemic

The Supreme Court issued [an order](#) today suspending criminal and civil jury trials and in-person grand jury sessions in response to a second wave of COVID-19 infections.

Most court hearings have been held remotely since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in March. As COVID cases declined and the court put safety measures in place, limited in-person proceedings, including socially distanced jury trials and in-person grand jury sessions, were able to resume in September.

“The increasing rates of new cases, hospitalizations and deaths make it impracticable and unsafe for certain in-person court events to continue at the level reached during the past few months,” the Court wrote in an order signed by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner.

The Court’s order extends the period of excludable time for prosecutors to bring cases to a grand jury by 45 days. In-person grand jury panels can switch to a virtual format, and existing virtual grand jury panels may continue to convene, under the order.

Virtual grand juries have been established in all 21 counties. The Judiciary has provided technology as necessary to enable participation by all qualified jurors.

Since the start of the pandemic, judges have conducted more than 100,000 remote court events involving more than 1.2 million participants.

The one in-person jury trial in progress will be allowed to continue. Fewer in-person trials are ordinarily held in late-November and December.

Since September, about a dozen jury trials have been conducted. The resumption of jury trials, though, resulted in the resolution of more than 115 criminal cases and settlements in more than 225 civil cases.

The Court said in its order that it will continue to be guided by experts in public health as it administers court operations in a manner that prioritizes the safety of court users.

#