

Superior Court

Notice to the Bar & Public

January 25, 2011

ATTENTION Law Office Personnel: Please ensure that ALL staff, attorneys and non-attorneys are aware of the contents of this notice.

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Courthouse Closures

As a budget cutting measure the county is closing the courthouse ten Fridays in 2011 and 2012. Those dates are identified on the county web page and on the Court's web page at the URL at the foot of this page. The Court will hear adult first appearances, juvenile offender detention hearings and emergency matters, only. No other matters will be scheduled or heard. The Clerk's office will be open as usual at 8:30 AM and may close at any time after Noon, depending on hearings in progress. Staff will be available in the morning to conduct jail interviews and process any civil domestic violence protection orders. Pleadings filed will not be docketed or scanned on closure days.

Parenting Coordinator Program

The Court announces its adoption of a **Parenting Coordinator Program**. The Parenting Coordinator program is a voluntary child-focused dispute resolution process that is designed to assist parents to resolve their parenting disputes without court intervention. The Parenting Coordinator may make Decisions resolving disputes between the parents regarding child/ren that do not affect the Court's exclusive jurisdiction to determine fundamental issues of residential time and placement. With the parents' agreement, the Court will appoint a qualified professional from the Parenting Coordinator Registry to act as the Parenting Coordinator in their case for a specified period of time. The Parenting Coordinator will have the authority to negotiate, decide or recommend solutions for specific disputes, but cannot make substantive changes in an existing Parenting Plan. The ultimate goal is to help parents resolve disputed or difficult issues amicably and in a timely manner. Coordinator fees are paid by the parties. The Parenting Coordinator Policy, the Stipulation and Order Appointing Parenting Coordinator and the Registry Application are on the court's web page shown at the foot of this page. The program has been adopted in a number of jurisdictions. It provides parents an expeditious way to resolve "emergency" disputes, while saving courtroom time for other substantive matters.

Affidavits of Prejudice/Recusal Practice

Effective at the beginning of 2011 the Court has modified the way it tracks affidavits of prejudice and recusals, and reassigns judges in those instances. The purpose of the change is keep reassignments equal or nearly equal and not in a strict rotation.

Changes to Juvenile Offender Calendars

In order to lessen the impact of Friday closures, the Thursday and Friday morning offender calendars have been modestly changed. The new calendars appear on the "Calendars" link on the court web page, as Commissioner's Weekly Calendar (Effective 2/7/2011).

Probate Practice Tip

Several have asked for clarity about using RCW 9A.72.085 authorized "under penalty of perjury" declarations of attesting will witnesses in lieu of notarized affidavits described in RCW 11.12.020(2). The "under penalty of perjury" option under Title 9A may be used, in all circumstances.

Preferred Pleadings Fonts for Scanned Image Legibility

[REPRINT from 2005 Bar Notice] We are noticing that some documents are hard to read. One of the problems is with "serif" fonts, such as Times Roman. The curls on the serif fonts can make a 3 look like an 8, even under several magnifications. Offices might want to consider using Arial or Helvetica "sans serif" fonts.

