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NEWS RELEASE

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PANDEMIC-RELATED EMERGENCY BAIL SCHEDULE, TRAFFIC RELIEF ENDING THIS MONTH IN ALIGNMENT WITH EXPIRATION OF STATEWIDE JUDICIAL BRANCH EMERGENCY COVID-19 RULES

As the statewide judicial branch Emergency Rules Related to COVID-19 are set to expire on June 30 and after the Governor has lifted most of his pandemic orders since he declared a state of emergency on March 4, 2020, the Court this week is rescinding two bail-related actions adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resuming normal operations as follows:

- Effective June 30, 2022, the Court's Emergency Bail Schedule (EBS), which was adopted as a temporary modification to the county's bail schedules in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be rescinded. Adopted in response to the Governor's March 2020 statewide emergency, the EBS, once rescinded, will be replaced by the county's underlying Infractions & Misdemeanors Bail Schedule and the Felony Bail Schedule.
- Effective July 1, traffic litigants will be required to post bail in the following circumstances:
 - ❖ For arraignments with trials set for the same day, as required by Vehicle Code 40519 (a); and
 - ❖ For trial by written declaration and trial de novo, as required by Vehicle Code 40902 (b).

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EMERGENCY BAIL

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EMERGENCY BAIL SCHEDULE CHANGES

The EBS was not conceived as a part of California's efforts at zero cash bail reform. They are completely different. Zero-dollar bail initiatives seek, as a matter of public policy, to permanently eliminate cash bail as part of bail reform. The Court's EBS did not eliminate cash bail and was intended to be a temporary response to the pandemic-related dangers inherent in pretrial incarceration. It worked within the existing statutory framework, reducing bail for certain offenses in a manner intended to reduce the local jail population to safe levels given the reported higher risk of transmission and illness in that confined environment, while balancing public safety outside the jail. It is important to note the EBS excluded repeat offenders initially released without bail. The EBS also excluded any violent or serious felony, and a list of certain misdemeanors. The exclusions included all violent and serious felonies as defined under Penal Code section 667.5(c) and Penal Code section 1192.7(c). While most of the crimes not eligible for release under the EBS involved crimes against another person, the EBS also exempted property and non-violent offenses where public safety was involved, including:

- Driving Under the Influence - Vehicle Code §§ 23152 & 23153;
- Vandalism - Penal Code § 594(b)(1); and
- Violation of a Protective Order; Penal Code § 166(c)(1)

TRAFFIC BAIL CHANGES

During the height of the COVID pandemic, the Court provided temporary emergency pandemic relief to traffic litigants, which allowed them to resolve their cases more easily without having to come to court. In recent months, state and county officials have lifted COVID restrictions and several judicial branch COVID emergency rules already have expired, with the remainder of pandemic-related measures to sunset on June 30 – signaling a normalization of operations.

Since late 2020, litigants have the option to appear remotely for most hearings via [LACourtConnect](#) (LACC), the Court's remote courtroom appearance solution. More than 33,500 litigants have elected to appear remotely by audio and/or video for traffic arraignments or other **non-trial** court appearances. The option to appear in person or remotely for most hearings is a

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permanent feature of the Court's [AccessLACourt | Your Way](#) service model. The Court also will continue to serve traffic litigants with its convenient [call center](#) for all citations, making contacting the court more efficient regardless of what courthouse is handling the citation.

To assist traffic litigants, the Court has the following services and options available:

- **OPTION 1: Online Services**

Many traffic matters can be resolved online without speaking to a clerk on the phone or coming to a courthouse. Online services, including the ability to look up a traffic ticket by driver's license or citation number, Gina the Court's traffic avatar – which offers virtual assistance in multiple languages – and a hearing reminder service, can be [accessed here](#). Litigants must have their citation number and/or driver's license number available.

- **OPTION 2: Traffic Call Center**

Many traffic matters can be resolved by calling the Traffic Call Center at (213) 633-6300. Staff is available to guide traffic litigants through options to resolve their citations, including enrolling in payment plans, submitting ability to pay petitions, requesting extensions, scheduling court hearings to release driver's license holds and more. Services are provided in all languages. The Traffic Call Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday, except court holidays.

- **OPTION 3: In-Person Clerk's Office Service by Appointment**

Litigants who wish to speak with a clerk in person are encouraged to schedule an appointment in advance to avoid waiting in line. To schedule an appointment with the Clerk's Office, please call the Traffic Call Center at (213) 633-6300. Appointments are encouraged but not necessary – litigants without an appointment will be seen by a clerk.

- **OPTION 4: Schedule a Court Hearing to Appear Before a Judge**

Litigants may schedule a court hearing by using the Court's online service option (litigants must have their driver's license or citation number available) or by calling the Traffic Call Center at (213) 633-6300.

- **OPTION 5: Removing a License Hold**

Litigants whose California driver's license is suspended due to unpaid traffic citations may call the Traffic Call Center at (213) 633-6300 to set a future hearing date. Driver's license holds may be released from the DMV once an appearance in court is made.

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- **OPTION 6: Request a Trial by Written Declaration**

Any time before the original appearance/extension date, litigants may request a trial by declaration if they are unable to appear in court. Once the request is received, the Court will provide a date by which the declaration must be submitted, and the litigant must complete and submit the declaration on or before the date provided. In accordance with Vehicle Code 40902 (b), effective July 1, traffic litigants must post the total fine (bail) amount along with a request for trial by written declaration. More information on trial by written declaration can be found on the [Court's traffic webpage](#) or on the [Judicial Council's webpage](#).

Additional information for traffic litigants is available on the Court's traffic webpage, www.LACourt.org/Traffic.

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