

Below is the Order of the Court.





Marc Barreca
U.S. Bankruptcy Judge

(Dated as of Entered on Docket date above)

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON**

In re:

CLARIFYING THE ORIGINAL SIGNATURE
REQUIREMENT OF LOCAL BANKRUPTCY
RULE 5005-1(D)(2) AND TELEPHONIC
HEARINGS

General Order No. 2020-03

This General Order is being issued in response to the developing outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Washington State, and in conjunction with the District Court's General Order 02-20, dated March 17, 2020.

Telephonic Hearing Schedule: General Order 02-20 stated that the Bankruptcy Court would continue with scheduled non-evidentiary hearings telephonically as posted on the Court's website and announced by individual judges. The Court further clarifies its procedures as set forth herein.

Original Signature Requirement: The majority of documents filed with the Court are filed electronically in the Court's Electronic Case Filing System (ECF). Local Bankruptcy Rule 5005-1(d)(2) provides that pleadings, affidavits or other documents that require original signatures or verification shall be filed electronically. The rule further provides that "the original signed document, in hard copy or electronic form, shall be maintained" by the attorney or the

1 party originating the document. Current restrictions on social contact due to the COVID-19 may
2 prevent attorneys from timely obtaining original signatures and interfere with the ability to provide
3 appropriate bankruptcy relief.

4 Accordingly, it is hereby **ORDERED**:

5 1. All scheduled non-evidentiary hearings will be heard telephonically, except as
6 specifically directed by the individual judge, until further order of the Court. For evidentiary
7 hearings and trial dates scheduled to occur before June 1, 2020, chambers will determine
8 whether each matter should be continued or conducted in court, telephonically or by video as
9 practicable and will contact parties accordingly.

10 2. Until further order of the Court, the requirement of Local Bankruptcy Rule 5005-1(d)(2)
11 that “the original signed document, in hard copy or electronic form, shall be maintained” by the
12 attorney or the party originating the document is clarified as follows. Before electronically filing
13 a pleading or document requiring a signature or verification, the registered ECF filer must (a)
14 obtain and maintain the signatory’s original physical signature, or (b) obtain and maintain the
15 signatory’s digital signature via a commercially available digital signature software product that
16 provides signature authentication. The filing of a pleading or document under this General Order
17 constitutes a certification that the registered ECF filer has complied with the foregoing provisions
18 regarding the signature.

19 *///End of Order///*
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