

Statement by the Los Angeles County Bar Association's  
Professional Responsibility and Ethics Committee:

In light of the unprecedented risks associated with the novel Coronavirus, we urge all lawyers to liberally exercise every professional courtesy and/or discretionary authority vested in them to avoid placing parties, counsel, witnesses, judges or court personnel under undue or avoidable stresses, or health risk. Accordingly, we remind lawyers that the Guidelines for Civility in Litigation (LASC Local Rules, Appendix 3A) require that lawyers grant reasonable requests for extensions and other accommodations.

Given the current circumstances, attorneys should be prepared to agree to reasonable extensions and continuances as may be necessary or advisable to avoid in-person meetings, hearings or deposition obligations. Consistent with California Rule of Professional Conduct 1.2(a), lawyers should also consult with their clients to seek authorization to extend such extensions or to stipulate to continuances in instances where the clients' authorization or consent may be required.

While we expect further guidance from the court system will be forthcoming, lawyers must do their best to help mitigate stress and health risk to litigants, counsel and court personnel. Any sharp practices that increase risk or which seek to take advantage of the current health crisis must be avoided in every instance.