

# THE RATCHFORD FIRM

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## **RATCHFORD FIRM COVID-19 UPDATE** **03.24.2020**

As the situation surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic continues to evolve, we want to reach out to each of you to share the additional precautions and change of procedure that our firm is implementing to enable us to continue to provide you with excellent level of service that you have come to expect from us. We are open for business and are committed to providing legal services and real estate closings in a safe environment with as little delay or disruption as possible.

### **General Appointments**

At this time, we are limiting our in-office appointments. Appointments that we are unable to handle remotely via teleconferencing or video conferencing will be permitted – to include urgent matters, document signings, and real estate closings. We encourage the use of telephonic or email communication with our attorneys and staff to the extent possible. We have removed periodicals and shared objects from our waiting area and ask that visitors to our office check-in and return to their vehicles until such time as we are able to meet with you or call our office upon your arrival to avoid the necessity of entering the building. If you need to sign documents, we are happy to provide you with drive-up service when possible. Inside our offices, we are:

- Closely monitoring CDC and DPH updates and guidelines
- Practicing safe hygiene and frequent hand-washing
- Making hand sanitizer available in all common areas
- Utilizing multiple conference rooms for multiple parties
- Providing single-use pens and gloves
- Disinfecting common areas and conference rooms between each appointment
- Monitoring the temperature of all attorneys and staff entering the building
- Practicing social distancing – all of our work spaces are in excess of 6 feet apart and we regularly disinfect all work spaces and common areas

As some supplies are limited, we encourage any guests to our office to bring their own pens, glasses, masks, gloves, disinfectant wipes or any item that helps them feel more comfortable.

Please reschedule any appointments if you are feeling even the slightest bit under the weather or are running a fever.

## **Conducting Closings**

We understand that every closing is unique and always has been. As such, we are implementing procedures that protect the health and well-being of our guests in a variety of ways depending upon the circumstances involved. We can:

- Assist our guests in signing remotely – at home (see below), in their cars, and outside
- Send closing documents to buyers and sellers in advance of closing. We can email or FedEx all documents (subject to timely receipt from Lender) for at-home execution prior to Closing except those requiring witness and notary public. All documents requiring Closing Attorney, witness, and notary public can be signed in our office parking lot with the Closing Attorney avoiding any need to enter any enclosed space. We even have a drive-up area for your convenience.
- Utilize separate conference rooms for buyers and sellers
- Make arrangements for our notaries to meet buyers and sellers for the signing of powers of attorney and other documents
- Allow cash buyers to sign closing documents electronically
- Provide an unaffiliated Power of Attorney to execute documents on your behalf (subject to lender approval). All documents will be sent for review and approval prior to Closing.

While we are happy to accommodate closings in our office, please note that they will be subject to the same CDC recommended precautions and procedures as currently being utilized for our general appointments. We ask that only the required parties to the closing attend in person (those who are needing to sign). We are happy to videoconference others in to make your closing as enjoyable as possible. Obviously for the health and safety of everyone involved, this option is preferably reserved for those parties truly requiring an in-person closing in our offices.

## **If You are Unable to Attend an Appointment or Closing**

We know that each of our guests will make a responsible decision for themselves and their families with regards to attending an appointment or closing. If you are unable to attend an appointment or closing, please notify us as far in advance as possible. If you are not a required party and are unable to attend an in-person closing, we are happy to include you via video or can take pictures and text/email them to you. We will continue to be diligent to work with our clients and guest to identify a workable solution to any obstacles within our control.

We want to thank each of you for your support and loyalty. We understand that the current situation is unprecedented and there are going to be challenges. We ask for your patience as we implement these changes to ensure your on-going health and safety. We will continue to provide updates as new guidelines and recommendations are released or as new solutions develop. We will get through this, like so many other trials and tribulations that have come before.

**Best Wishes and Stay Healthy,**

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