

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF MARIN**



*Press Release  
(For immediate release: July 19, 2011)*

**Marin County Superior Court  
Plans to Close Offsite Juvenile Court Facility**

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Following several years of budget cuts and on-going public safety concerns at the juvenile court facility, the Marin County Superior Court has decided permanently to close this courtroom effective Monday, September 19, 2011 and move all juvenile proceedings to the Marin County Civic Center Hall of Justice. The juvenile court facility was built many years ago in the Lucas Valley area of San Rafael and, at that time, was not designed with court security as a prime consideration. The recent increase in serious juvenile offenses and gang-related crime has brought these design deficiencies into sharp focus. For more than two years, the Court has made proposals to improve security in the juvenile courtroom without requiring an increase in the number of security personnel. The Court has been unable to reach consensus with the Public Defender's Office and indigent defense bar, and has received no constructive suggestions from them or any other interested party as to modifications to the courtroom or court proceedings to make the courtroom safe for court users and the public. Unfortunately, the latest proposal to add physical security has been seriously mischaracterized by critics who apparently oppose any change to the juvenile facility. This opposition has led the Court to conclude that the only way to address the public safety issues in the juvenile courtroom is by moving all juvenile proceedings to the Marin Civic Center. At the main courthouse, all members of the public, attorneys and others who have court hearings must go through perimeter screening and bailiffs are available to cover court proceedings.

Regarding the closure of the juvenile court facility, Court Executive Officer Kim Turner acknowledges that this is just one in a series of difficult decisions that courts will confront as the impact of multi-year budget cuts is realized. She states, "With courts across California under severe budget pressures, courtroom closures will be part of our new reality. San Francisco Superior Court is planning to close 25 courtrooms and other courts will soon follow. In Marin, we made every attempt to avoid this consequence but met with such resistance we were left with no option but to close the juvenile facility. We need more visionary thinking from those who resist change in criminal justice, as it is inevitable that courts will have to adjust the way they do business in the future. We were very disconcerted to see our reasonable efforts to make the courtroom safe for court users and the public characterized in misleading and negative terms. It would be indefensible for the Court to continue to conduct court hearings in a facility it believes to be inherently unsafe."

The law requires sixty days notice to the public, the Judicial Council and the Legislature before closing courtrooms.

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For additional information regarding this press release,  
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