

21- R 534

FILED

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER – GUILFORD COUNTY COURTS

The undersigned Senior Resident Superior Court Judge and Chief District Court Judge for Judicial District 18 enter this Administrative Order pursuant to Governor Roy Cooper's continuing declaration of a statewide emergency and Chief Justice Paul Newby's Administrative Order in response to the coronavirus COVID-19.

IT APPEARING TO THE COURT that on March 13, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper declared a state of emergency and recognized that the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services recommends that people at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 avoid large groups of people as much as possible" and further recognized that the "people at high risk of severe illness" are "adults over 65 years, those with underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes, or with weakened immune systems."

On May 14, 2021, Governor Roy Cooper and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services lifted the requirements for face coverings and social distancing requirements for fully vaccinated persons.

On May 14, 2021, Chief Justice Paul Newby eliminated Emergency Directive 21 from the May 10, 2021, Order of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina pertaining to face coverings in court facilities and left the decision to the informed discretion of local court officials.

AND IT FURTHER APPEARING TO THE COURT that Article 1, Section 18 of the North Carolina Constitution provides "All courts shall be open; every person for an injury done him in his lands, goods, person, or reputation shall have remedy by due course of law, and right and justice shall be administered without favor, denial or delay."

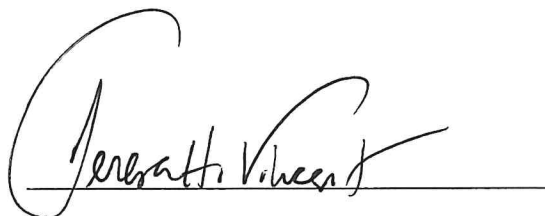
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. The general public, jurors, court personnel and attorneys shall wear a face-covering ("mask") while in the Guilford County Courthouses, except as follows:
 - a. Guilford County Court Department Leaders (The Clerk of Superior Court, Public Defender, District Attorney, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge and Chief District Court Judge) may allow staff to work in the offices without wearing a mask, so long as seventy percent (70%) of the attorneys, judges, or staff in the department are fully vaccinated.
 - b. While attorneys or litigants are actively engaged with the court in a plea, trial, or motion, and are standing or seated at counsel tables or at a court podium, masks are not required during engagement with the court, unless there is good cause to do so. (Note: Face-coverings must still be worn while communicating pleas with Assistant District Attorneys.)
 - c. Jurors who are in the jury assembly room as well as those jurors who are empaneled to hear civil and criminal jury trials shall wear masks at all times, except when they are responding to questions propounded by the judge or attorneys during the jury selection process, or unless the presiding judge otherwise allows masks to be removed while in the jury box.

THIS the 27th day of May, 2021.

/s/ John O. Craig

John O. Craig, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge



Teresa H. Vincent, Chief District Court Judge