

FILED

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

GOVERNING COURTHOUSE FACILITIES IN

ONSLOW, DUPLIN, SAMPSON, AND JONES COUNTIES, C.S.C.

JUN 15 10 P 3 55

COURT CLERK

BY *al*

Now comes the undersigned Chief District Court Judge and Senior Resident Superior Court Judge for Judicial District Four and enters the following Administrative Order related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Whereas, a previous order was entered by the undersigned on June 15, 2021 as a result of an order entered on May 14, 2021 by Chief Justice Paul Newby recognizing that the threat of the COVID-19 virus was lessening and aspects of life were progressing toward a pre-pandemic normal. The mandates and directives, previously ordered governing court and courthouse operations, were relaxed in this June 15, 2021 order, in that:

1. Fully vaccinated individuals are no longer required to wear face masks in order to enter a courthouse or while they are in the common areas.
2. Face masks are **strongly recommended** for those who are not vaccinated. If necessary, a judicial official, in reaching a decision as to the level of precautions necessary for their courtroom or workspace can inquire as to whether a person present has been fully vaccinated.
3. All individuals who wish to continue to wear masks will be permitted to do so.
4. All judicial officials can establish the precautions, rules and protocols that will be required in their courtroom or chambers.
5. Each department head, assistant or deputy clerk, after consultation with the Clerk of Court, will be allowed to determine what precautions will be required in their office or workspace.
6. It is encouraged that social distancing be maintained, but the presiding judicial official can set what that distance should be based upon the availability of space and the needs of the venue. This includes what space can be used for jury trials and deliberations.

In the June 15, 2021 order, other directives were entered to apply to all jury trials.

Whereas, a variant of the COVID-19 virus has evolved that is more transmittable than the original virus that spread in 2020 for which several vaccines were developed. These vaccines have been available to the public, and many have taken advantage of this access. During the past few weeks, each county in the judicial district has seen an increase in infections from this variant which has resulted in the need to reassess our courthouse and courtroom protocols and procedures.

Whereas, the judicial officials in each county have consulted with each other as to how best to address the impact of this new evolving threat and to provide for the safety and health of those citizens who work in and have business before the courts and in the courthouse.

Whereas, the State of North Carolina and the governing and court officials of each county have strongly encouraged its citizens to become fully vaccinated and to daily exercise personal safety and health precautions to prevent the spread of the virus and its variants.

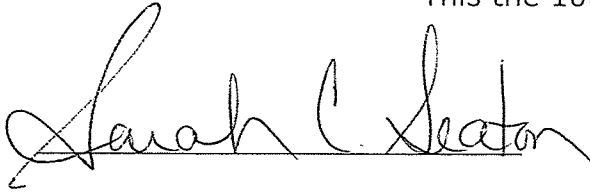
Whereas, it is the intent of court officials to protect the health, safety and well-being of the citizens who seek orderly access to our courts and judicial systems. It is encouraged that all persons entering the courthouse facility to social distance, use available hand sanitizer and wash their hands regularly. It is also the consensus of most judicial officials that a face covering requirement would help achieve these health and safety goals.

Based upon the foregoing, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

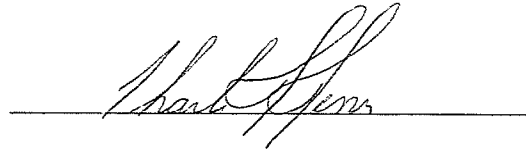
1. The general public, jurors, court personnel and attorneys shall wear a face-covering (mask) while in the common areas of any courthouse facility or in the courtrooms in the judicial district. This face covering shall cover the nose and mouth and remain in place unless allowed to remove it to conduct the business of the court or the business of the office of Clerk of Court.
2. When face covering masks are available, courthouse personnel will assist those persons who try to enter the courthouse facility who do not have a face covering. Unless there is a medical reason for an individual to be unable to wear a mask, the sheriff can deny admittance to any individual who refuses to comply with this order.
3. No person, who has been told to quarantine or isolate from others by a health care provider or health department official or who is exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19, will be permitted to enter the courthouse.
4. A copy of this order will be posted at each entrance to the courthouse and be made available to sheriff office personnel to inform persons who have questions regarding these requirements.

5. When good cause is found, judicial officials may relax these restrictions in their work spaces or courtrooms in their discretion.
6. This order is effective upon filing with the Clerk of Court.
7. This order will be reviewed periodically with the first review to be conducted on August 27, 2021 and at least every two weeks thereafter.

This the 10th day of August, 2021.



Chief District Court Judge



Senior Resident Superior Court Judge