



TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
WAKE COUNTY
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July 30, 2021

From: Hon. Paul Ridgeway, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge
Hon. Debra Sasser, Chief District Court Judge
Hon. Lorrin Freeman, District Attorney
Hon. Blair Williams, Clerk of Superior Court
Hon. Chris Graves, Chief Magistrate
Mr. Deonte Thomas, Chief Public Defender
Ms. Kellie Myers, Trial Court Administrator

Re: COVID-19 Public Safety Policies - 10th Judicial District

In consideration of the recent directive dated July 30, 2021 from Wake County governmental officials regarding all county facilities, as well as guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge and the Chief District Court Judge, in consultation with the 10th Judicial District Emergency Response Team, issue the following safety policies. These safety policies replace in their entirety the policies contained in the June 10, 2021 COVID-19 Public Safety Policies and supersede Administrative Order 21R 342 filed May 17, 2021.

These policies shall apply to the Judicial Facilities of the 10th Judicial District (Wake County). These policies shall remain in effect until further notice and are subject to change at any time to reflect current medical and safety advice and guidance.

These policies are a baseline. Hiring authorities, judicial officials, and courthouse security personnel have discretion to require additional safety measures, as needed, to protect courthouse personnel and the public while honoring the Judicial Branch's commitment to open courts and the prompt administration of impartial justice. Additional information about the Judicial Branch's response to the COVID-19 outbreak is available at <https://www.nccourts.gov/covid-19>.

These policies are not a substitute for personal responsibility -- the CDC recommends that every person take affirmative measures, including vaccination, to avoid contracting COVID-19. The CDC measures vary depending on whether individuals have been fully vaccinated and may be reviewed at <https://www.cdc.gov>.

DEFINITIONS

Judicial Facilities: The Wake County Justice Center, the Wake County Courthouse, and those portions of the Hammond Road Detention Facility utilized for judicial functions.

Courthouse Personnel: Persons working within Judicial Facilities, including judges and staff, magistrates and staff, clerks of court and staff, public defenders and staff, district attorneys and staff, court reporters, interpreters, probation and parole officers with offices in Judicial Facilities, bailiffs assigned to Judicial Facilities and security personnel assigned to Judicial Facilities.

POLICIES

Effective August 2, 2021, all persons who are in a Judicial Facility are required to wear a face covering while they are in public areas of the facility, including courtrooms, public corridors, elevators and waiting areas. Courthouse personnel are not required to wear face coverings when in their private workspace and not interacting with others. For purposes of this emergency directive, a “face covering” means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is simply wrapped around the lower face. This face-covering requirement does not apply to persons who cannot wear a face covering due to health or safety reasons, who are actively eating or drinking, who are communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible, who are temporarily removing their face covering to secure medical services or for identification purposes, or who are under eleven years of age. Judicial officials may allow face coverings to be removed for brief periods to facilitate communication during court proceedings after due consideration for the safety of others in the proximity of the speaker.

Please note that also beginning August 2, 2021, security personnel stationed at entrances to Judicial Facilities will be asking COVID-19 screening questions of all persons entering the facilities.