

FILED

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
JUSTICE
WAKE COUNTY

2021 MAY 17 PM 12: 10
WAKE CO., C.S.C.

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF
FILE NO: 21 R 342

JOINT DISTRICT AND SUPERIOR)
COURT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER)
REGARDING FACE COVERINGS IN)
JUDICIAL FACILITIES)

THIS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER is being entered to ensure the fair and proper administration of justice and to mitigate the public health threat posed by COVID-19. The undersigned enter this Administrative Order pursuant to the inherent authority of the court and pursuant to their administrative supervision and authority over the operation of the Superior Courts and District Courts under N.C.G.S. 7A-41.1 and N.C.G.S. 7A-146 as Senior Resident Superior Court Judge and Chief District Court Judge respectively for the Tenth Judicial District of North Carolina.

Whereas COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death by the SARS-CoV-2 virus which is a new strain of coronavirus that can be spread from person to person; and

Whereas the Governor of North Carolina, on March 10, 2020, by Executive Order declared a state of emergency to coordinate response and protective actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

Whereas the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, by Order dated March 13, 2020 and subsequent Emergency Orders and Directives thereafter, determined, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 7A-39(b)(2), that catastrophic conditions resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak have existed in all counties of this state; and

Whereas, on May 14, 2021, the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, eliminated Emergency Directive 21 that pertains to face coverings in court facilities and instead leaves that decision to the informed discretion of local court officials; and

Whereas, on May 14, 2021, the Governor of the State of North Carolina, in Executive Order No. 215, fully lifted the indoor face covering requirement on most businesses and operations in North Carolina; and

Whereas, on May 13, 2021, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) issued new Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People that advised that currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at protecting vaccinated people against symptomatic and severe COVID-19, that fully vaccinated people are less likely to transmit COVID-19 to others, and recommended that “[i]ndoor and outdoor activities pose minimal risk to fully vaccinated people” and that in most settings, “fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing face coverings;” and

Whereas, based upon the foregoing and in the totality of these circumstances, the undersigned have determined that at this time the Face Covering requirements in judicial facilities should be lifted as follows:

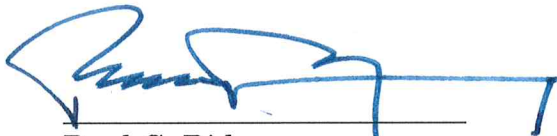
WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

Effective immediately, persons who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are not required to wear face coverings in judicial facilities. Those who have not been fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings at all times while in judicial facilities. All persons are strongly encouraged to continue to adhere to safety precautions to avoid infection.

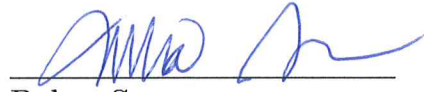
Face coverings may be required of all persons, including fully vaccinated persons, in courtrooms or other areas of judicial facilities in the discretion of judicial officials, bailiffs, or area supervisors if deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of all.

The Wake Courts Emergency Response Team is currently reviewing comprehensive revisions to COVID-19 safety protocols for the judicial facilities and court operations in light of the above-mentioned Center for Disease Control guidance and Emergency Orders of the Governor and Chief Justice. This interim policy pertains to face coverings in judicial facilities only and supersedes the policies regarding face coverings in the June 19, 2020 COVID-19 Public Safety Policies - 10th Judicial District. This Order does not supersede any other safety protocols currently in effect. Further guidance will be forthcoming.

Entered and effective this the 17th day of May, 2021.



Paul C. Ridgeway
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge
Tenth Judicial District



Debra Sasser
Chief District Court Judge
Tenth Judicial District