

SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2021 – 06

COVID-19 PROCEDURE

WHEREAS, the 6th Circuit Court had, pursuant to Supreme Court orders and in recognition of the executive orders of the Governor of Illinois, reduced its operations to essential activities.

WHEREAS, the 6th Circuit had, for those reasons cited in prior 6th Circuit Administrative Orders, resumed Court operations subject to some limitations including the wearing of masks.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Supreme Court Order 30370 from May 27, 2021, Courts have the discretion whether to require masks in courtrooms for fully-vaccinated persons (defined as two weeks after the final injection).

WHEREAS, it is appropriate and necessary to update prior Administrative Orders, taking access to justice and public safety into account, and upon considering guidance from the Supreme Court, Governor and public health officials;

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED with respect to all courthouses within the 6th Judicial Circuit that Administrative Order 2020-07 is rescinded and replaced with the following:

1. **Resumption of All Matters.** Courts are no longer limited to hearing only essential activities. Courts may resume all matters and schedule them accordingly.
2. **Courtroom Limitations and Reduced Call Size.** Each county and courtroom are different. The Presiding Judge of each county is uniquely positioned to determine best practices to reduce the number of persons present in the courtroom or court environs, as needed, including social distancing in courtrooms and jury deliberation rooms. Remote hearings are strongly encouraged, when appropriate and for those judges able to accommodate such hearings.
3. **Screening.** In consultation with the respective Sheriff of each county, the Presiding Judge may require a health screening at the security checkpoint or point of entry at the courthouse. Said screening may include, but may not be limited to: a temperature check, an identification check (to assist with possible contact tracing if necessary), required use of hand sanitizer, and/or a written or verbal questionnaire. Anyone turned away or refusing the screening will be asked to leave his/her name and contact address with security so that this information can be passed along to the appropriate courtroom.
4. **Prohibited Entry.** No person will be allowed access to the Courthouse if that person:
 - a. Has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the previous 14 days;
 - b. Has flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptom identified by a health professionals as a symptom of COVID-19;

- c. Has been directed by a medical provider to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor at home for COVID-19;
- d. Reside with, or have regular close contact with, a person who was directed to quarantine or isolate by public health officials or a medical professional.
- e. Traveled to, or been in close contact with anyone who has traveled to, any country designated by the CDC as a high-risk location for COVID-19, within the last 14 days.

Subsections (d) and (e) do not apply to fully-vaccinated persons unless they are exhibiting symptoms.

- 5. **Masks / Face Coverings.** Masks or other face coverings are not required in judicial areas or courtrooms for fully-vaccinated persons. Any person who wishes to wear such a covering may do so. The Sheriff may require face coverings for entry into the courthouse. Persons required to speak during a court proceeding may be directed to remove their covering while speaking. This section 5 applies to judges, court personnel, attorneys, litigants, jurors, witnesses and the public.
- 6. **Precautions.** Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned daily by courthouse personnel. Hand sanitizer should be made available to the public in multiple locations throughout the courthouse and in each courtroom.
- 7. **Jury Trials.** The Presiding Judge of each county shall determine the priority of jury trials and the appropriate courtroom(s) or spaces to accommodate them including jury deliberations.
- 8. **Law Library / Self-Help Centers.** The Presiding Judge is authorized to make any orders reasonably necessary to promote the health and well-being of any patron or worker in the courthouse law library or self-help centers. Said orders may include restricting hours, number of persons, requiring appointments, or closing said sites altogether.
- 9. **Individual Judge/Courtroom Order.** Attorneys and parties should be aware that individual judges may issue their own guidance on practices in certain courtrooms with the approval of the Presiding Judge.
- 10. **Effective Date.** This Administrative Order will take effect immediately and may be extended, supplemented, or amended as circumstances require.

6/3/21
Date

R. V. B. Rosenbaum
Randall B Rosenbaum, Chief Judge
Sixth Judicial Circuit