

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

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IN RE:
COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE EXIGENT
CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY COVID-19

GENERAL ORDER

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has declared a national emergency, and the Governor of the State of Connecticut has declared a public health emergency throughout the State;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised people to take precautions against the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) outbreak, including social distancing and the wearing of masks and other cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain; AND

WHEREAS, the Court continues to review its operations to identify measures that will help slow the spread of the virus by minimizing contact between persons, while at the same time preserving its core mission of serving the public through the fair and impartial administration of justice

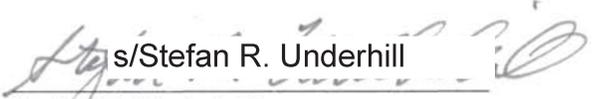
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, **effective June 16, 2020, and until further order**, that:

- 1) Beginning June 16, 2020, individual judges will determine, after giving due consideration to the public health risks presented by in-court appearances, whether it is in the interests of justice to hold any non-jury civil or criminal proceeding in the courtroom. A judge presiding over a case may decide to hold a proceeding in the courtroom, to hold the proceeding over video or telephone, or to hold a “hybrid” proceeding in which the number of persons in the courtroom is limited while other persons participate or observe remotely via video or telephone. In all cases, judges will notify the parties through the CM/ECF system whether, and to what extent, a proceeding will be held in the courtroom. Jury trials will continue to be governed by this Court’s General Order dated May 19, 2020.

- 2) For any in-court proceedings after June 15, 2020, all participants, unless the judge orders otherwise, and all persons attending the proceeding must wear masks at all times, as required by this Court's General Order dated May 19, 2020. Further, all participants and attendees must comply with social distancing measures implemented in the courtroom, including standing or sitting in designated areas.
- 3) Because the grand jury performs an essential service that can safely be performed in a courtroom without anyone breaching social distancing rules, and because the Court has twice safely hosted the grand jury in the New Haven courthouse in recent weeks after taking measures aimed at protecting grand jurors, the U.S. Attorney's Office may begin conducting grand jury proceedings in any courthouse after June 15, 2020. All grand jurors shall observe appropriate social distancing and shall wear masks while present in the courthouse. Additional precautions shall be undertaken as necessary to promote safety and encourage grand juror participation.
- 4) During this period, and until further order of the Court, staff in the Clerk's Office will continue to telework to the maximum extent possible consistent with serving the needs of the public. Limited staff will be present at the Clerk's office at each seat of court to process filings and answer telephonic questions from the public during normal business hours. Telework policies applicable to judges' chambers will be decided by each judge.
- 5) This paragraph supersedes the General Order dated March 11, 2020 related to restrictions on visitors to courthouses. The following persons shall not enter any courthouse in the District of Connecticut:
 - Persons who have, within the past 21 days, experienced fever or flu-like symptoms or the loss of the sense of taste or smell;
 - Persons who have tested positive for COVID-19, unless at least 21 days have passed from the positive test or the experience of fever, flu-like symptoms, or the loss of the sense of taste or smell, whichever is later;
 - Persons who have had close contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, unless at least 21 days have passed from either the other person's positive test or the close contact with that other person.

Dated: June 12, 2020
Bridgeport, CT

SO ORDERED:


Stefan R. Underhill
Stefan R. Underhill
Chief United States District Judge