

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

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

GENERAL ORDER

WHEREAS, the Court continues to review its operations to identify measures that will help protect court employees and the public from the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus), while at the same time preserving its core mission of serving the public through the fair and impartial administration of justice;

WHEREAS, the Court's ongoing review of its operations includes monitoring of vaccination and COVID-19 positivity rates in Connecticut and surrounding areas, and consultation with its retained science advisor;

WHEREAS, new case counts and positivity rates in Connecticut have been steadily rising during the past few weeks, and some areas of Connecticut are currently reporting more than 10 new cases per 100,000 residents per day;

WHEREAS, on July 27, 2021, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued updated guidance recommending the wearing of masks by all persons, including vaccinated persons, in indoor public settings in geographic areas of substantial or high transmission of COVID-19, including all three Connecticut counties in which the Court's operations are located;

And WHEREAS, given the current levels of prevalence of the COVID-19 virus in the State of Connecticut and the general upward trend of the past few weeks,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, **effective immediately and until further order of the Court**, that:

1. This order supersedes the General Order entered on July 19, 2021.
2. *Masks*. Persons entering a federal courthouse in this District and court employees must wear at least one mask that is effective to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94, cloth masks, or medical masks, in all cases covering the nose

and mouth). Such persons shall wear masks at all times in public spaces, including but not limited to courtrooms, hallways, bathrooms, Clerk's Office public counter/intake area, Probation Office reception, elevators, and stairwells.

3. *Distancing.* All persons entering a federal courthouse in this District (including the Bankruptcy Court facility and Probation and Pretrial Services Office located at 157 Church Street, New Haven) and court employees shall maintain 6 feet of distance from each other at all times in public spaces, including but not limited to courtrooms, hallways, bathrooms, Clerk's Office public counter/intake area, Probation Office reception, elevators, and stairwells.
4. *Court Proceedings.* Because court proceedings, and especially jury selections and trials, may require large numbers of persons to be present together for sustained periods of time, the presiding judge may, in his or her discretion, impose additional safeguards during such proceedings, including but not limited to requiring persons attending court proceedings to show proof of full vaccination and restricting attendance to a number of persons small enough to ensure full distancing (in which case the Court will conduct a hybrid proceeding, with all interested persons and members of the public able to participate over Zoom).
5. *No Entry in Certain Situations.* No person may enter any courthouse in this District who fits any of the following descriptions: Within the past 14 days, (1) the person has experienced fever or flu-like symptoms (including persistent headache or sore throat) or the loss of the sense of taste or smell, (2) the person has tested positive for COVID-19, (3) the person has had close contact – meaning closer than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes cumulative over a 24-hour period – with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or (4) the person has traveled outside the United States; but any such person may enter if the person shows proof at the courthouse entrance of a negative COVID-19 test performed within the past two days (and after arrival in the United States for those who have traveled internationally).
6. *Clerk's Office.* The Clerk's Office will be open to the public, but Clerk's Office staff may limit the numbers of persons in the intake counter areas to allow for appropriate distancing. The Clerk's office will not accept cash payments.

This order is based in part on the current levels of prevalence of the COVID-19 virus in the communities served by the Court. Should there be a significant and lasting change in the prevalence levels in those communities, the Court may revisit this order.

SO ORDERED:

Dated: August 2, 2021
Bridgeport, CT


Stefan R. Underhill
Chief United State District Judge