

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, while at the same time preserving its core mission of serving the public through the fair and impartial administration of justice;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) has recently updated its guidance concerning the wearing of masks to reduce the spread of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the CDC’s current guidance advises the adoption of mask-wearing practices based on the level of prevalence of COVID-19 in the community (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>); specifically, the CDC advises that each individual should wear a mask indoors in public spaces when the level of COVID-19 in the surrounding community is high, but that when the level is medium or low, mask wearing should be based on each individual’s personal preference informed by that individual’s personal level of risk;

WHEREAS, according to current data published by the CDC, the three counties of Connecticut in which the three seats of U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut are located are currently experiencing different levels of COVID-19, with Hartford and New Haven Counties currently experiencing high levels and Fairfield County currently experiencing a medium level (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>);

WHEREAS, the Court finds it appropriate to adopt a policy that tracks the CDC guidance applicable to each seat of Court;

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

- 1) This order supersedes the General Order entered on March 4, 2022.

- 2) *In a courthouse within the District of Connecticut that is located in a county where the CDC considers the current level of COVID-19 to be high* (as shown on its website, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>), individuals are required to wear masks in all public spaces, including courtrooms, hallways, bathrooms, and jury assembly and deliberation rooms, unless, with respect to courtrooms and jury assembly and deliberation rooms, the presiding judge specifically orders otherwise.
- 3) *In a courthouse located in a county where the CDC considers the current level of COVID-19 to be medium or low*, individuals are not required to wear masks in hallways and bathrooms. In courtrooms and jury assembly and deliberation rooms, individuals are not required to wear masks unless the presiding judge orders otherwise. Even when the level of COVID-19 in the community is medium or low, it may be necessary during jury trials and other large gatherings for individual judges to impose mask orders for public spaces under the Court's control because such proceedings often require individuals to sit together in close quarters for long periods of time.
- 4) Judges may require individuals to wear masks when in their chambers, regardless of the level of COVID-19 shown on the CDC website.
- 5) Any person who wishes to wear a mask in any location in the courthouse may do so, regardless of the level of COVID-19 shown on the CDC website.

This order is based on the current CDC guidance about the levels of prevalence of the COVID-19 virus in the communities served by the Court. Should there be a significant change in that guidance or in the prevalence levels in those communities, the Court may revisit this order.

SO ORDERED:

Dated: May 9, 2022
Bridgeport, CT


Stefan R. Underhill
Chief United States District Judge