

**IN THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER S-2021-028
(Supersedes Administrative Order S-2021-006)**

**REVISED HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN
COURTHOUSE FACILITIES DURING COVID-19
MITIGATION EFFORTS (MAY 7, 2021)**

In light of the ready availability of COVID-19 vaccinations, the Florida Supreme Court has revised certain health and safety requirements regarding access to courthouse facilities. See Florida Supreme Court Administrative Order AOSC20-32, Amendment 8 (*COVID-19 Public Health and Safety Precautions for Operational Phase Transitions*, May 6, 2021). As a result of this development, the health and safety requirements for entry and initial access to courthouse facilities in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit during COVID-19 mitigation efforts have served their purpose and are no longer required while other health and safety requirements such as face mask wearing and social distancing are still necessary during in-person court proceedings.

By the power vested in the chief judge under article V, section 2(d), Florida Constitution; section 43.26, Florida Statutes; Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b); and Florida Supreme Court Administrative Orders AOSC20-32, Amendment 8 (*COVID-19 Public Health and Safety Precautions for Operational Phase Transitions*, May 6, 2021), and in an effort to implement the phased transition to regular court operations while coexisting with COVID-19, it is ORDERED:

1. Definitions

For purposes of this administrative order, the following terms have the following meanings:

A. *Clear face mask* means a face mask with a clear plastic panel or panels to better enable the viewing of a wearer's facial expressions.

B. *Courthouse facility* means any building in which judicial proceedings are conducted or court system representatives are stationed, including, but not limited to: the George Edgecomb Courthouse (800 East Twiggs Street, Tampa); the Criminal Courthouse Annex (401 North Jefferson Street, Tampa); the former Hillsborough County Courthouse (419 Pierce Street, Tampa); the building located at 700 East Twiggs Street, Tampa; and the Plant City Courthouse (301 North Michigan Street, Plant City).

C. *Face mask* means a mask or other cloth fabric that fits snugly but comfortably around the nose, chin, and sides of one's face and completely covers the nostrils and mouth but does not cover the eyes and remains affixed in place without the use of one's hands, concurrent with guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

D. *In-person court proceeding* means the assembly of prospective jurors, *voir dire*, juror deliberations, and any status conference, hearing, trial, or other proceeding conducted by a judge, general magistrate, or hearing officer if conducted in person.

2. Face Mask Requirements

A. Courthouse Entry

Face masks are no longer required to be worn when entering a courthouse facility. However, anyone entering a courtroom, hearing room or jury assembly room when in-person court proceedings are being conducted must wear a face mask. Therefore, litigants, attorneys, jurors, witnesses, victims, and other visitors are strongly encouraged to bring their own face mask. If any person does not bring her or his own face mask, a face mask will be provided at no cost.

B. Public Areas

Except for courtrooms, hearing rooms, and jury assembly rooms used during in-person court proceedings, face masks are no longer required to be worn throughout the public areas of the courthouse facilities, including lobbies, hallways, corridors, elevators, stairwells, and restrooms.

C. Judicial Chambers, Private Offices and Other Work Spaces

Face masks are not required to be worn in any judicial chambers or private offices. Face masks are also not required to be worn in other work spaces, unless an individual's work space is in a courtroom or hearing room during in-person court proceedings or in a jury assembly room while prospective jurors are being assembled.

D. Jury Assembly Room(s)

Face masks covering the nose and mouth are required to be worn by everyone in all jury assembly rooms during the assembly of prospective jurors.

E. Courtrooms & Hearing Rooms

In accordance with Florida Supreme Court Administrative Order AOSC20-32, Amendment 8 (May 6, 2021), face masks covering the nose and mouth are required to be worn by everyone in a courtroom or hearing room during an in-person court proceeding. Presiding judges and quasi-judicial officers have the discretion to have any individual wearing an indecent or distracting face mask removed from the courtroom or hearing room.

F. Clear Face Masks

The presiding may authorize the use of clear face masks for jurors, witnesses, or any other participants during any in-person court proceeding.

G. Allowance to Wear Face Mask

Even when not attending an in-person court proceeding, any person may voluntarily choose to wear a face mask in any area of a courthouse facility.

3. Social Distancing

Social distancing, i.e. maintaining at least a 6-foot social distance from each other at all times, must be enforced by the presiding judge or quasi-judicial officer during all in-person court

proceedings. Except for in-person court proceedings in courtrooms, hearing rooms, and jury assembly rooms, social distancing is no longer required in any other area of the courthouse facilities.

4. Sanctions

The requirement to wear face masks during in-person court proceedings must be enforced by the presiding judges and quasi-judicial officers. Any person who willfully violates the provisions of this administrative order will be subject to the contempt powers of the court and any other appropriate disciplinary measures.

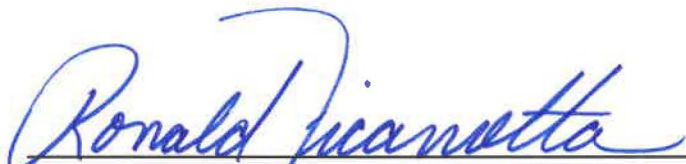
5. Previous Administrative Order Superseded

This administrative order supersedes Administrative Order S-2021-006 (*Health & Safety Requirements in Courthouse Facilities during COVID-19 Mitigation Efforts*).

6. Effective Date

This administrative order is effective immediately and remains in effect until further order of the chief judge.

ENTERED on May 7, 2021 at 2:25 p.m.



Ronald N. Ficarrotta, Chief Judge

Original: Cindy Stuart, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Copy: All Judges

All General Magistrates and Hearing Officers

Gina Justice, Trial Court Administrator

Andrew H. Warren, State Attorney

Julianne Holt, Public Defender

Chad Chronister, Sheriff

Brian Dugan, Chief, Tampa Police Department

Edward E. Duncan, Chief, Plant City Police Department

Kenneth R. Albano, Chief, Temple Terrace Police
Department
Charlie Vazquez, Chief, TIA Police Department
Christopher Daniel, Chief, USF Police Department
Doug Bakke, COO, Court Operations, Clerk's Office
Hillsborough County Bar Association
Pat Kemp, Chair, Board of County Commissioners
Christine Beck, Hillsborough County Attorney
Bonnie Wise, Hillsborough County Administrator
Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel, Second District
Patrick Barrentine, Department of Corrections
Tabitha Lambert, Guardian ad Litem Program
Chris Card, Executive Director, Eckerd Connects
Stephanie Bergen, OAG, Children's Legal Services
Jonathan Jenkins, Regional Counsel's Office
Beth Pasek, Community Development Coordinator, DCF
Jennifer Hock, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office
Department of Juvenile Justice
ACTS Juvenile Assessment Center