

FILED

5 JUN 15 2021 5

LEE COUNTY CIRCUIT CLERK

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF LEE

Administrative Order No. 2021- 8

ORDER AMENDING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS, PROTOCOLS, and PROCEDURES

WHEREAS, the Illinois Supreme Court has entered Order M.R. 30370 instructing the courts to continue to establish and periodically update procedures to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on the court system, while continuing to provide access to justice and has issued the "Guideline for Resuming Illinois Judicial Branch Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic" authorizing essential court matters and proceedings to be heard;

WHEREAS, the Illinois Supreme Court amended Order M.R. 30370 on May 27, 2021, regarding policies and procedures related to the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS, the amended Order provides courts discretion to apply provisions of the Order pertaining to masks or face coverings for the fully vaccinated;

WHEREAS, the Lee County Courts will continue to take all reasonable measures and precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) routinely updates its guidelines and recommendations in response to, and to prevent the spread of, COVID-19;

WHEREAS, after consultation with and from various local justice partners and upon guidance received from the Illinois Supreme Court considering the most recent CDC recommendations, it is necessary and appropriate to make changes to court operations taking access to justice and public safety into account;

WHEREFORE, the undersigned, Presiding Judge of Lee County, does hereby order as follows:

1. **Entry to Court Facilities.** Pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court M.R. 30370 entered May 27, 2021, **no individual may enter** any courthouse/law and justice center or court facility if they:

a. have new flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, or shortness of breath (excluding such symptoms caused by any chronic conditions); or

b. currently have been directed to quarantine or isolate at home by any medical provider or public health official; or

c. reside or have regular close contact with a person currently subject to a quarantine or isolation directive issued by a medical provider or public health official **and are not themselves fully vaccinated.** Anyone not allowed entry will be asked to leave his or her name and contact information with security so that this information can be passed along to the presiding judge or respective courtroom staff.

2. **Face coverings.** All individuals, including judges, court staff, parties, attorneys, jurors and witnesses must wear a face covering or mask while within any court facility **unless**:

a. the individual is under the age of 2;

b. the individual is incapacitated or medically intolerant; or

c. the individual is fully vaccinated.

“Fully vaccinated” means being two weeks past the final vaccine injection. The Court has the right to inquire as to any person’s vaccination status. An attorney’s election not to wear a mask is a representation to the Court under Supreme Court Rule of Professional Conduct 3.3 that the attorney has been fully vaccinated.

Failure to wear an appropriate mask or face covering may lead to removal from the building.

Any person may choose to wear a mask or facial covering regardless of his/her vaccination status, but persons required to speak during a court proceeding may be directed to remove a mask or facial covering when speaking.

3. **Temperature Checks.** Temperature checks will no longer be required for entry into the courthouse but any person entering may be questioned regarding any COVID-19 issues and required to submit to an identification check.

4. **Proof of Vaccination.** The Court will not routinely screen persons in the courthouse to determine their vaccination status but reserves the right to inquire as to any person's vaccination status and/or require proof thereof.

5. **Social Distancing.** Within all court facilities all individuals, including judges, court staff, parties, attorneys, jurors and witnesses, shall maintain at least six-foot social distancing from others **unless fully vaccinated.**

6. **Expanded In-Person Court Proceedings.** In-person court proceedings are now encouraged with the limitations set forth herein. Limited remote proceedings in civil cases are allowed if the judge presiding over the case provides permission pursuant to the procedures set forth in Administrative Order No. 2020-19. No judge is mandated to hold a remote hearing. The goal is to increase in-person access in the courtroom and their environs with safety precautions outlined in this order.