

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
VERMILION COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2021-6**

**REGARDING FACIAL COVERING AND SOCIAL DISTANCING  
MITIGATION MEASURES IN  
THE RITA B. GARMAN VERMILION COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

The Circuit Court for Vermilion County in the Fifth Judicial Circuit of Illinois adopts the following administrative order pertaining to court operations during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus [COVID-19] pandemic:

**WHEREAS**, on March 17, 2020, the Illinois Supreme Court entered an Order - *In re: Illinois Courts Response to COVID-19 Emergency, MR. 30370*, directing all courts to establish and periodically update procedures to minimize potential exposure to and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on judicial operations, while continuing to provide access to justice; subsequent to that date the Court has issued additional orders for resuming court operations;

**WHEREAS**, since March 2020, the Circuit Judges of Vermilion County considered changing national, state, and local public health data and the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], the Illinois Department of Public Health [IDPH], and local public health agencies based upon that data, and adopted measures designed to protect the health and welfare of all employees and patrons of the Rita B. Garman Vermilion County Courthouse [the Courthouse], while fulfilling the judiciary's mission to protect the rights and liberties of the People by providing equal access to justice;

**WHEREAS**, on July 20, 2021, the Circuit Judges of Vermilion County considered changing national, state, and local public health data and the recommendations of the CDC, the IDPH, and local public health agencies based upon that data, and adopted measures relaxing certain COVID-19 mitigation measures;

**WHEREAS**, on August 26, 2021, the Governor of the State of Illinois issued Executive Order 2021-20, which provides in relevant part:

Section 1: Face Covering requirements for individuals. Beginning on Monday, August 30, 2021, all individuals in Illinois who are age two or over and able to medically tolerate a face covering (a mask or cloth face covering) shall be required to cover their nose and mouth with a face covering when in an indoor public place....

Face coverings may be removed temporarily while actively eating or drinking ... and may be removed by workers at workplaces when they can consistently maintain six feet of distance (such as when workers are in their office or cubicle space).

All individuals, including those who are fully vaccinated, shall continue to be required to wear a face covering ... (2) in congregate facilities such as correctional facilities...;

**WHEREAS**, the Circuit Judges of Vermilion County have evaluated the local public health data and recommendations of local health agencies based upon that data within the county, and determine that public health conditions within the County include increasing COVID-19 infection rates to such a degree that many court operations should be modified to continue to protect the health and safety of the public and courthouse employees within the Courthouse, all with the goals of protecting the health and welfare of all Courthouse employees and patrons, while fulfilling the judiciary's mission to provide essential services to the citizens of the County, and attending the court's administrative responsibilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Circuit Judges of Vermilion County FINDING it is now necessary and appropriate to amend prior administrative orders entered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic while taking into account the mandate of the court to provide access to justice and protect the health and welfare of all Courthouse employees and patrons, and pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 21(b) and the court's inherent authority, acting through the Presiding Judge, adopt the following provisions as the order of the court:

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:**

- 1. Effective Date.** This administrative order is effective *instanter* and its precautionary measures shall remain in effect until amended or modified by further order of the court.
- 2.** The provisions of Administrative Order Nos. 2020-1 through 2020-12, 2020-17, 2021-1, 2021-3, and 2021-5 are hereby supplemented, and to the extent inconsistent herewith superseded.
- 3. Face Coverings.** Anyone over two (2) years of age, regardless of vaccination status, entering the public spaces of the Courthouse, and who is able to medically tolerate a face-covering, shall wear a face-covering or mask at all times when located within the indoor public spaces of the Courthouse and shall, when possible, maintain a six foot (6') social distance. This provision applies to all persons entering the Courthouse, including, but not limited to all State and County employees and elected officials essential to court operations (judges, court administration staff, deputy circuit clerks, state's attorney's staff, public defender staff, court security, court reporters and specialists, probation services staff, building and grounds staff, information technology staff, and the like), attorneys, litigants, witnesses, and vendors.'

Subject to the discretion of all elected and appointed officials, Courthouse personnel may remove their face covering or mask in their office or work space when able to maintain social distance.

All persons inside a courtroom, who are able to medically tolerate a face-covering, including courtroom personnel, must also wear one at all times while inside of the courtroom. Litigants, attorneys or others may remove their face covering or mask when directed or authorized to do so by the judge presiding over the hearing.

These provisions with respect to face coverings shall extend to and apply to all persons entering the Vermilion County Administration Building or any other facility for grand jury proceedings, including state and local office holders, attorneys, court personnel, grand jurors summoned for duty, and witnesses, including law enforcement personnel. All persons inside a grand jury courtroom, who are able to medically tolerate a face-covering, including courtroom personnel, must also wear one at all times while inside of the courtroom.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for individuals with medical conditions or disabilities that prevent them from safely wearing masks/face coverings. An individual who is not medically able to tolerate a mask/face covering due to a medical condition or disability should contact the Court's Disability Coordinator as soon as possible in advance of the scheduled court proceeding, so that appropriate and reasonable accommodations may be made.

4. All persons entering the public spaces of the Courthouse are expected to have their own face-covering. Court Administration will provide Courthouse security personnel with a limited supply of face-coverings. Any person who does not have a face-covering and needs access to the Courthouse will, when available, be provided with a face-covering. If a person enters the Courthouse without a mask and none are available from security personnel, entrance to the Courthouse will be denied.

#### **5. Miscellaneous.**

- a. The court may issue further orders as necessary to address circumstances and conditions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, including re-assessing the provisions of this Administrative Order to determine if additional measures are required to protect court personnel and the public, and/or whether public health conditions warrant the easing of precautionary measures.
- b. It is further ordered that this Administrative Order be filed in the Office of the Circuit Clerk of Vermilion County and be made available to the public.
- c. The Clerk of the Circuit Court shall post this Administrative Order on her website.
- d. This Administrative Order shall be posted upon the County's website.

- e. All other general orders not in conflict with this order are still in full force and effect. The Court may issue further Orders, as necessary, to address the changing circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dated: this 30<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021



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Thomas M. O'Shaughnessy, Presiding Circuit Judge