

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON

FOR THE COUNTY OF CLACKAMAS

In the Matter of: )  
 )  
**Protective Face Coverings in the** ) **PRESIDING JUDGE ORDER**  
**Clackamas County Circuit Court** ) **2021-18**  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

On June 28, 2021, Chief Justice Walters issued Chief Justice Order (CJO) 21-025, which established updated directives relating to court operations, including an easing of earlier requirements for wearing protective face coverings.

On July 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued Guidance to the effect that local decision-makers should assess certain factors to inform the need for prevention strategies to minimize preventable morbidity and mortality related to COVID-19, including the level of COVID-19 transmission, health system capacity, vaccination coverage, capacity for early detection of increases in COVID-19 cases, and populations at risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19. The CDC Guidance further states that proven effective strategies against transmission, beyond vaccination, include the use of protective face coverings.

Also, on July 27, 2021, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) issued a recommendation for use of protective face coverings in all public indoor settings statewide. Effective August 2, 2021, Chief Justice Walters issued CJO 21-028, reinstating the face covering requirement for entering or working in court facilities with certain exceptions for fully vaccinated individuals.

On August 11, 2021, as a result of the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of COVID-19, Governor Brown imposed a requirement that face coverings be worn in indoors in public buildings regardless of vaccination status, effective August 13, 2021. Governor Brown encouraged the judicial branch to institute the same requirement.

On August 13, Chief Justice Walters issues CJO 21-030, reinstating mask requirements that were in place from Spring 2020 through Summer 2021. In issuing this Order, the Court has considered: CJO 21-030, the Governor's actions and request; CDC Guidance and OHA recommendations; current risk levels across Clackamas County; the vulnerable populations that the Courts serves; the jurors and potential jurors who report to the court; and the need to act so that judges, court staff, and the public are protected and we can keep courts open to provide necessary services.

This Order is based on the foregoing and on currently available information concerning the risks and spread of the COVID-19 virus, and the effectiveness of vaccines, and may be

revised as further information becomes available or as directives from the Governor or guidance from health authorities change.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. Definitions. As used in this order:

- a. “Administrative Authority” means, as to any judge, the Presiding Judge; as to any staff, “Administrative Authority” has the meaning set out in Judicial Department Personnel Rule 2.01.
- b. “Court facility” means the courthouse or any alternative physical location being used by the court, but not any part of a building or location that is not under the court’s control.
- c. “Enclosed office or workstation” means an office or workstation that is enclosed from floor to ceiling on all sides, including a courtroom.
- d. “In person” means that a court proceeding is being conducted in the court facility, including at least one in-person participant who is neither the judge nor court staff.
- e. “Open work area” means a work area consisting of one or more temporary or permanent workstations that either have no barriers or are partially separated by barriers that do not enclose the workstation from floor to ceiling on all sides, such as cubicles.
- f. “Participant” means any individual who is participating in a proceeding, other than the judge and staff, including lawyers, parties, witnesses, jurors, interpreters, and courtroom security personnel.
- g. “Presiding Judge” means the presiding judge of a judicial district or any person to whom that judge has delegated authority under this order.
- h. “Proceeding” means a trial, hearing, or other proceeding. When this order grants authority to a judge presiding over an in-person proceeding, that same authority extends to a mediator conducting an in-person mediation, a facilitator providing in-person facilitation services, or the Citizen Review Board conducting in-person review of cases involving children in foster care.
- i. “Protective face covering” means a covering of the nose and mouth to protect against spreading the COVID-19 virus, as recommended, or described as a means of protection by the CDC and OHA.
- j. “Staff” means Oregon Judicial Department staff.

## 2. General Requirements

- a. Except for children under 2 years of age, and unless an exception or exemption described in this order applies, all persons entering or working in the court facility, including judges and staff, are required to wear a protective face covering while in the court facility.
- b. Enclosed offices and workstations
  - i. Judges and staff may remove their face coverings when they are alone in enclosed offices or workstations. When judges or staff leave their enclosed offices or workstations, or when another person enters their enclosed offices or workstations, they must wear a protective face covering, unless an exception or exemption applies.
  - ii. Subparagraph 2.b.(i) applies to a workstation located within an openwork area of any size, including any workstation partially separated by barriers from that open area, such as a cubicle, but only if
    1. Only 1 person is working in that open work area; and
    2. That open work area is separated from the public by a floor to ceiling divider.

## 3. Court proceedings conducted in person

- a. A judge presiding over an in-person proceeding may:
  - i. Temporarily remove the judge's protective face covering to ensure that a particular participating person understands a particular communication from the judge;
  - ii. Require or permit a juror to temporarily remove a protective face covering when the juror is answering a question during voir dire;
  - iii. Require or permit a witness to remove a protective face covering when the witness is testifying, provided that a minimum of 6 feet of social distance is consistently maintained between the witness and any other person; and
  - iv. Require or permit any other participating person to temporarily remove a protective face covering to ensure that a particular communication is understood.
- b. When the judge who is presiding removes the judge's own protective face covering or requires or permits a juror, witness, or any other participating person to do so under subparagraph 3.a.,

- i. if the removal is for less than 15 minutes, the judge may use or require other protective measures, such as the use of a face shield or protective physical barrier, additional social distancing, or the use of remote means;
- ii. if the removal is for more than 15 minutes, the judge shall use or require other protective measures, such as the use of a face shield or protective physical barrier, additional social distancing, or the use of remote means.

4. Exemptions

- a. A Presiding Judge or that judge's designee(s) may grant an exemption from paragraph 2 to any person who seeks to enter, but who does not work in, the court facility, due to disability, respiratory or other health-related issues, or other legally required cause. The Presiding Judge shall grant such an exemption when required by law.
  - b. An Administrative Authority may grant an exemption from paragraph 2 to a judge or a staff person who works in the court facility only when the law requires an exemption due to disability or other legally required cause. The Administrative Authority may grant a temporary exemption from this rule for the time necessary to determine whether the law requires an exemption.
  - c. If an exemption is granted under this paragraph, the Presiding Judge or that judge's designee(s) may require other protective measures, such as the use of a face shield or protective physical barrier, social distancing, or the use of remote means.
5. The court will provide protective face coverings and information about how to use them.
  6. The effective date of PJO 2021-13 regarding juvenile dependence remote and in-person hearings is extended to October 18, 2021.
  7. This order supersedes CJO 21-028 and PJO 2021-16.
  8. This order is effective on August 16, 2021, and will remain in effect until amended, superseded, or vacated by further Chief Justice Order.

DATED this 27 day of August, 2021.



Kathie F. Steele  
Clackamas County Circuit Court  
Presiding Judge