

**LIFTING COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS:
WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT**

June 2021

On June 25, 2021, Oregon Governor Kate Brown announced that restrictions imposed during the state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be lifted as of June 30, 2021. On June 28, 2021, Chief Justice Martha Walters of the Oregon Supreme Court issued a Chief Justice Order (CJO) lifting most restrictions on court proceedings imposed during the pandemic, while authorizing individual courts to continue requiring masks and holding proceedings by remote means during a transition period. [Statewide Judicial Orders](#)

On June 29, Multnomah County Circuit Court Presiding Judge Stephen K. Bushong issued a Presiding Judge Order (PJO) describing how various court proceedings will be conducted during the **Transition Period**—June 30 to September 7—and describing how proceedings will be conducted during the **Post-Pandemic Period**—September 7 and thereafter. Judge Bushong also issued a separate PJO continuing to require masks in public areas of the courthouse until August 1. [Multnomah COVID-19 Court Orders](#)

The net effects of these actions are summarized below (review the CJO and PJO for details):

- Most court proceedings will continue to be conducted remotely—by WebEx telephone or video—during the Transition Period
- The court will increase the number of in-person jury trials conducted in criminal cases during the Transition Period to catch up on the many criminal trials that were delayed during the pandemic
- In-person jury trials in civil cases will fully resume starting September 7, 2021
- Justice Center Courtrooms will open for in-person arraignments, probation violation hearings, and other matters starting July 20, 2021
- Most court proceedings in domestic relations and probate cases will be conducted in person starting September 7; Dependency and Termination of Parental Rights proceedings will be in-person starting September 7; other juvenile proceedings will begin in person starting October 4, 2021
- Some court proceedings—motion hearings in civil cases, for example—will continue to be conducted through remote means during the Post-Pandemic Period.

- Protective face coverings will still be required to enter the courthouse and while in all public areas of the courthouse, through August 1

The court has relied on “lessons learned” during the pandemic and feedback from interested parties in attempting to define the court proceedings that should continue to be held by telephone or video during the Post-Pandemic Period. The PJO should be treated as a starting point in attempting to determine which remote proceedings should be continued after the pandemic. Lawyers wishing to provide additional feedback on that issue should contact the MBA.