

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
GENERAL DIVISION
FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO**

21MS _____

**TWELFTH GENERAL ORDER IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19
(CORONAVIRUS) PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

The General Division Judges of the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas make the following Findings of Fact:

1. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 to be a global “pandemic” requiring “urgent and aggressive action” to control the spread of the virus.
2. The Franklin County, City of Columbus and state of Ohio Departments of Health and the CDC recommend continued precautions against the spread of COVID-19.
3. Many members of the public having business before the Court remain unvaccinated and accurately ascertaining vaccination status is not possible.

Based upon these Findings of Fact, the General Division of the Court of Common Pleas developed protocols in response to this public health emergency. These protocols are intended to protect public health, maintain essential court functions, and continue to protect the rights of all individuals subject to the authority of the Court.

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. The General Division Local Rules of Court may be temporarily modified to allow Court flexibility, within Constitutional limits, in response to the public health emergency.
2. The General Division policies may be temporarily adjusted to maintain essential court operations and functions.
3. The General Division authorizes the use of audiovisual devices and technologies for all actions and proceedings.
4. The General Division has determined the public health emergency is good cause for continuances.

5. The General Division will have the lawful authority, within constitutional limits, to do or direct to be done all things necessary to ensure the orderly and efficient administration of justice and public safety for the duration of the declared state of emergency.
6. Beginning July 6, 2021, the Court will operate utilizing a rotating docket schedule **for jury trials only** through October 29, 2021. To allow sufficient distancing of jurors and participants, jury trials will be held in the respective courtrooms utilizing the following schedule:

Judicial Courtrooms A and E <u>Magistrate Courtrooms C</u> Alternating weeks beginning July 12, 2021 Continuing through the week of October 22, 2021	Judicial Courtrooms B and F <u>Magistrate Courtrooms D</u> Alternating weeks beginning July 6, 2021 Continuing through the week of October 29, 2021
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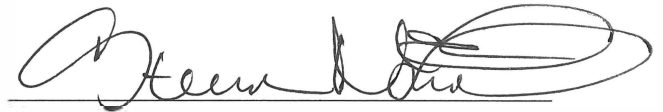
All other in-person proceedings may be held at any time.

7. Pursuant to policy amendments by Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture and Housing and other federal agencies, the single-family foreclosure moratorium for federally backed mortgages has been extended until July 31, 2021.
8. Individuals entering the courthouse or Probation Department who are fully vaccinated are not required to wear a face covering (mask). Individuals who are not fully vaccinated are required to wear a face covering in the courthouse and Probation Department unless a medically documented reason prevents the person from covering their face. Face covering/mask requirements in courtrooms or chambers shall be at the discretion of the individual judge or magistrate.

For the purpose of this Order, individuals are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after they receive the second dose in a two-dose series or two weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine. The Court or Probation Department may require an individual to provide proof of vaccination. Vaccinated individuals who wish to wear a face covering for personal health reasons shall be permitted to do so unless otherwise ordered by the Court. Persons refusing to wear a face covering when directed, except in instances of a medically documented waiver, may be subject to removal from the courthouse or Probation Department.

9. Court employees who are fully vaccinated are not required to wear a face covering/mask in the courthouse or Probation Department. Court employees who are not fully vaccinated are required to wear a face covering/mask. Face coverings/masks are not required when working alone in an assigned work area. All employees are required to comply with any judicial mask mandate in individual courtrooms and chambers. 'Fully vaccinated' has the same meaning as defined in Section 8.
10. All individuals in the courthouse and the Probation Department shall adhere to the 6-foot social distancing protocols.
11. All time frames set forth above may be further extended for a greater period of time subject to further order of the Court if deemed necessary.
12. The Court will issue an Order when normal operations resume.
13. This Order supersedes any provision in Orders 20MS156, 20MS159, 20MS168, 20MS198, 20MS283, 20MS603, 20MS608, 21MS59, 21MS82, 21MS107, and 21MS275 that are inconsistent with this Order.

HON. STEPHEN L. McINTOSH
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE



Date: July 27, 2021