

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

21MS _____

**FOURTEENTH 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
Magistrate Courtrooms C

Alternating weeks beginning
July 12, 2021

Continuing through the week of
October 22, 2021

Judicial Courtrooms B and F
Magistrate Courtrooms D

Alternating weeks beginning
July 6, 2021

Continuing through the week of
October 29, 2021

All other in-person proceedings may be held at any time.

7. Beginning November 1, 2021, the Court will operate utilizing a rotating docket schedule **for jury trials only** through December 31, 2021. To allow sufficient distancing of jurors and participants, jury trials will be held in the respective judicial courtrooms utilizing the following schedule:

Judicial Courtrooms A and E

Alternating weeks beginning
November 1, 2021

Continuing through the week ending
December 31, 2021

Judicial Courtrooms B and F

Alternating weeks beginning
November 8, 2021

Continuing through the week ending
December 24, 2021

All other in-person proceedings may be held at any time. An ‘off-rotation’ courtroom may hold a jury trial provided the ‘on-rotation’ chamber mate courtroom is not in a jury trial. This will maintain a maximum of two judicial trials per floor per week. Magistrates (courtrooms C and D) are not subject to the jury trial rotation.

8. Any individual entering the courthouse is required to wear a protective mask, covering the nose and mouth unless a medically documented reason prevents the person from covering their face. N95 medical masks are not required; cloth masks that have been purchased or are homemade are acceptable. The protective covering shall be worn at all times while the

individual is inside the courthouse, including courtrooms and the Adult Probation Department. Individuals are encouraged to bring their own facial covering; however, the Court will provide a mask if a person does not have access to their own facial covering. Persons refusing to wear a face covering, except in instances of a medically documented waiver, may be subject to removal from the courthouse or Probation Department.

9. All Court employees are required to wear masks. Masks are not required when working alone in an assigned work area.
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, 21MS275, and 21MS358 that are inconsistent with this Order.

HON. STEPHEN L. McINTOSH
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE



Date: 10/8/21