

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

**IN RE: COURT OPERATIONS
UNDER THE EXIGENT
CIRCUMSTANCES
CREATED BY COVID-19**

Case No. 4:95mc40111

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have warned of the threat represented by the outbreak and spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States. The World Health Organization labelled COVID-19 a global pandemic and the President of the United States and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis have declared a public health emergency throughout the United States and the State of Florida, respectively. According to these and other public health experts, social distancing measures and the use of cloth face masks are the most effective way to combat the rapid spread of COVID-19 and prevent illness.

In consideration of the serious health crisis facing the nation and the State of Florida from COVID-19 and in an effort to maintain the orderly administration of justice, the Court has determined that it is necessary and in the interest of public safety and justice, to take proactive measures to slow the spread of the virus and

protect the health and safety of litigants, counsel, Court staff, grand jurors, petit jurors, witnesses, and the public by requiring all persons who enter any courthouse within the Northern District of Florida to practice social distancing measures and to wear cloth face masks or other face coverings that cover the person's nose and mouth while in any public or common area within the facility. All entrances and exits, hallways, lobbies, restrooms, elevators, stairwells, jury assembly rooms or other locations used to process prospective jurors, clerk's office intake areas, and other similar areas accessible to the public are considered public or common areas covered by this Order.

Courtrooms, witness rooms, jury deliberation rooms, or other similar spaces used in connection with hearings, trials, or other matters before the Court are not considered common or public spaces and are not covered by this Order. Direction regarding social distancing and the requirement to wear cloth face masks in courtrooms, witness rooms, and jury deliberation rooms, or other spaces used in connection with hearings, trials, or other matters before the Court must be obtained from the presiding judge. Tenant spaces, to include judge's chambers, internal clerk's office space, and other internal tenant spaces that are not accessible to the public, also are not considered common or public spaces and are not covered by this Order. Direction regarding social distancing and the requirement to wear cloth face

masks in these areas must be obtained by the judge, unit executive, manager, or other appropriate agency representative.

The requirement to practice social distancing measures and to wear cloth face masks in common or public spaces applies to counsel, litigants, jurors, witnesses, government contractors or service providers, the public, visitors, and all Court or federal employees, including, but not limited to, employees of the United States District Court, Clerk's Office, United States Probation, the Federal Public Defender, United States Attorney's Office, and the United States Marshals Service. All in-custody defendants must also wear a cloth face mask while being transported to/from the courthouse and while inside the courthouse, except to the extent the presiding judge directs otherwise while the defendant is in the courtroom. Those individuals with a medical condition that precludes them from wearing a face mask and children under the age of two (2) are exempt from the requirement to wear face masks in common or public areas. Although individuals are encouraged to bring their own appropriate cloth face mask for use within the courthouse, if an individual does not have a face mask available, a disposable mask will be provided for their use while visiting or conducting business before the Court.

The Court recognizes that this situation continues to evolve and will issue additional Administrative Orders as necessary based on recommendations from other federal and state government and health officials.

DONE AND ORDERED this 26th day of June, 2020.

s/ Mark E. Walker

Chief United States District Judge