



Supreme Court of Missouri  
Post Office Box 150  
Jefferson City, Missouri  
65102

CHAMBERS OF  
PAUL C. WILSON  
CHIEF JUSTICE

TELEPHONE  
(573) 751-4513

August 2, 2021

Re: COVID-19 Delta Variant

Dear Chief and Presiding Judges,

Missouri is currently experiencing a statewide surge in COVID-19 delta variant cases. As I am sure you are all well aware, as of this date, all but one of the counties in Missouri have been designated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as areas with high or substantial transmission levels of COVID-19 and the delta variant. This transmission is occurring between and among vaccinated and unvaccinated populations and presents a considerable health risk to both. In response to the rapid spread of delta variant cases in Missouri and around the country, the CDC has issued new masking guidelines for any county designated by the CDC as an area of high or substantial transmission. Under these guidelines, all individuals – regardless of vaccination status – should be required to wear masks indoors in public spaces.

The Court has authorized me, in light of these circumstances, to reiterate the requirements of this Court’s COVID-19 order dated May 28, 2021, and reinforce the obligation we all share to implement and enforce necessary precautionary measures to safeguard the wellbeing of court staff and the public entering our court facilities. That order states that chief and presiding judges “*shall . . . monitor* the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 guidelines *and implement* any new or amended guidelines as necessary to ensure the safety of those appearing or working in court facilities.” That directive applies to the new CDC guidelines.

Accordingly, each of you is expected to monitor closely transmission levels in your county and both implement and enforce the recommended CDC precautionary measures in your facilities so long as the CDC designates transmission levels in your county as high or substantial. In exercising their discretion concerning the conduct of proceedings, judges may relieve the masking requirement for any lawyer, litigant or other person while that person is speaking in court. A copy of the recent order entered by Judge Cordonnier in the 31<sup>st</sup> Circuit is attached for your reference, and the CDC

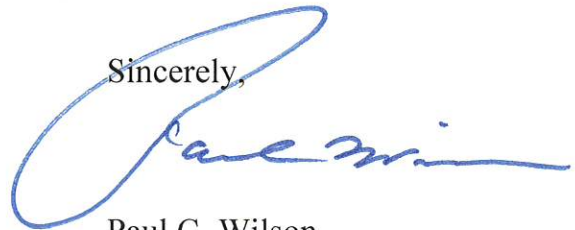
Chief and Presiding Judges  
August 2, 2021  
Page 2

designations regarding transmission levels for each Missouri county can be found on its website at: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>.

Cole County, like nearly all of the rest of Missouri, is designated as an area experiencing high transmission levels. As a result, this Court has joined the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court (which was one of the first to reinstate masking requirements two weeks ago) and has reinstated face mask requirements for all staff and members of the public throughout the public areas of our building. In addition, the Court again will use its website to disseminate information regarding the protective protocols in place in courtrooms and courthouses around the state. To assist in this effort to inform attorneys, litigants, and the public of these measures, please send each new COVID-19 order you enter to Betsy AuBuchon, Clerk of the Supreme Court, and Patricia Churchill, Deputy Counsel, so it can be posted on the website.

The Court recognizes the substantial impact implementation and enforcement of COVID-19 protocols and procedures has had – and will continue to have – on court staff and proceedings. But, as conditions wax and wane, our response needs to do so as well. The unprecedented public health concerns presented by COVID-19 and, now, by this highly transmittable variant require all of us to remain vigilant and willing to implement, without delay, recommended measures to ensure the safety of those who work and appear in our facilities.

Sincerely,



Paul C. Wilson

Attachment



MICHAEL J. CORDONNIER  
Presiding Judge

STATE OF MISSOURI  
CIRCUIT COURT, 31<sup>ST</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
GREENE COUNTY JUDICIAL FACILITY  
1010 Boonville Ave  
Springfield, Missouri 65802  
Phone (417) 868-4127  
Fax (417) 829-6366

KYLIE YOUNG  
Court Administrator

Lorree Allen  
Secretary to Presiding Judge

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF GREENE COUNTY  
STATE OF MISSOURI  
31<sup>ST</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**In Re: Court Normalization Order  
Notification to the Public - Face Coverings/Masking**

Administrative Order 2021-AO22

**WHEREAS** in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the President of the United States has declared a specific Variant of Concern, identified as the *Delta Variant*, as a “Pandemic of the Unvaccinated;” and

**WHEREAS** all COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States are **effective** at preventing COVID- 19, help protect people from getting sick or severely ill and might also help protect people around the vaccinated person, *See: Centers for Disease Control website, May 10, 2021*; and

**WHEREAS** despite the vaccines being widely available, certain parts of the country have very low rates of vaccination in the population and as a result the immunity offered has been less effective at slowing the rate of COVID-19 infection; and

**WHEREAS** the Centers for Disease Control has published a guidance that reads as follows:

“To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of **substantial or high transmission.**”  
*See: CDC Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People, July 27, 2021*;  
and

**WHEREAS** of the 114 counties and one independent city in the State of Missouri, 112 counties have been identified as areas of “substantial or high transmission;” and

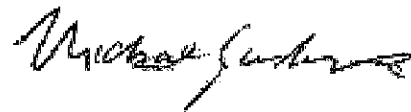
**WHEREAS** Greene County, Missouri, which includes the 31<sup>st</sup> Judicial Circuit, has been identified as an area of “high transmission.”

**WHEREFORE**, the Presiding Judge hereby enters the following order:

1. Effective August 1, 2021 all persons admitted to the public areas of the Greene County Judicial Courts Facility or the Greene County Juvenile Facility will be required to wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth.
2. All persons in the private areas of the Greene County Judicial Courts Facility or the Greene County Juvenile Facility shall continue to follow the CDC recommendation of no face covering necessary for persons that have been fully vaccinated; face covering is required of all persons not vaccinated; and all persons to observe 3' spacing whenever possible.
3. In order to preserve and enhance the ability to communicate, all judges are accorded the prerogative to relieve the masking requirement for all lawyers, litigants or other persons when those persons are speaking in court.
4. Judges, court staff, attorneys and parties are still encouraged to use all available technologies – including teleconferencing and video conferencing - whenever possible to limit in-person courtroom appearances to the extent practical and not prohibited by constitutional or statutory provisions.
5. The Court will continue the enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures undertaken at the Greene County Judicial Courts Facility and Greene County Juvenile Facility.
6. Judicial employees will be subject to quarantine based on various circumstances. Any employee who experiences COVID symptoms, or who has had any contact with another person that is sick, or has had contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID- 19 should immediately report that circumstance to their supervisor for further instructions.
7. **MUNICIPAL DIVISIONS**
  - a. The Municipal Divisions in Greene County, including Ash Grove, Battlefield, Fair Grove, Republic, Springfield, Strafford, Walnut Grove and Willard are each governed by the Order.

This Administrative Order shall remain in effect until rescinded or superseded by subsequent order of the court. It is hoped and anticipated that both the national and community circumstances will improve. Depending on the community circumstances, and the then current guidance from the CDC and the Springfield Greene County Health Department, the Court will amend this order as appropriate.

Dated: July 29, 2021



---

Michael J. Cordonnier  
Presiding Judge  
31<sup>st</sup> Judicial Circuit