

PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

Roger A. G. Sharpe, Clerk
46 East Ohio Street
Room 105
Indianapolis, IN 46204

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (May 25, 2021): Pursuant to a meeting of and unanimous votes by the Facility Security Committees for the federal courthouses in the Southern District of Indiana, Chief Judge Tanya Walton Pratt today issued a [General Order](#), effective **June 7, 2021**, stating that fully vaccinated individuals will be allowed to access public areas of the four courthouses of the Southern District of Indiana without wearing a face covering or observing social distancing. Members of the public who are not fully vaccinated must wear a face covering and practice social distancing throughout the courthouses. An exception may be made for a person providing documentation that he or she is unable, for medical reasons, to wear a face covering. All persons entering the courthouses will be asked a series of health screening questions.

An individual is fully vaccinated as defined by the CDC two weeks after receiving the second dose of a two-dose vaccine series (such as Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after receiving a single dose vaccine (such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine).

The General Order contains provisions allowing tenant agencies in the courthouses to determine the face covering and social distancing policies in their own spaces. Judges have the authority to determine such policies in their courtrooms, chambers, and any other spaces in which a court proceeding is being conducted, including at naturalization ceremonies.

In order to provide jurors peace of mind, all vaccinated **and** non-vaccinated persons summoned for jury service, and court staff interacting with such persons, must wear face coverings and adhere to social distancing requirements while in rooms and public spaces designated for juror check-in, orientation, and related activities until such persons enter a courtroom, at which time the rules and requirements of the presiding Judge take effect.

As explained in previous General Orders, the Clerk may temporarily excuse any person summoned for jury service upon a showing of undue hardship or extreme inconvenience, but the potential juror will be summoned again for jury service at a later date or be reinserted into the jury wheel. Until the Court orders otherwise, upon a person's written

request, the Clerk shall temporarily excuse for undue hardship or extreme inconvenience any potential juror who:

1. At the time of request has ongoing symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19;
2. Is in a category deemed at high risk of COVID-19 infection by the CDC or federal, state, or local public health authorities;
3. Is quarantined due to exposure to a person testing positive for COVID-19;
4. Is caring for a family member or other dependent with symptoms of COVID-19 or who has tested positive for COVID-19; or
5. Is a healthcare professional whose current employment is essential to the care and/or treatment of patients occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To reduce foot traffic and ease accessibility, the Court will continue to accept filings from pro se litigants via email. Information on how to do so can be found in a previous [General Order](#). Drop boxes for filings also remain accessible at all courthouses.

The District Court has also created a [COVID-19 response page on its website](#) that contains all orders, press releases, and other information regarding Court operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.