

18th Judicial District Plan

Complying with Tennessee Supreme Court Order

In Re: Covid-19 Pandemic

WHEREAS, the 18th Judicial District submitted a comprehensive plan dated April 24, 2020, (“the April 24th, 2020 COVID Plan”) containing guidelines and restrictions designed to minimize to the greatest possible extent the risk of spread of COVID-19 from in person court hearings; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of Tennessee at Nashville has issued an Order Modifying Capacity, Distancing, and Facial Covering Requirements as of May 14, 2021;

NOW THEREFORE, as evidenced by the undersigned, the 18th Judicial District of Tennessee hereby suspends indefinitely its April 24th, 2020 COVID Plan and modifies its Judicial Plan in Compliance with Tennessee Supreme Court Order In Re: COVID-19 Pandemic, No. ADM2020-00428 issued May 14, 2021, and adopts the following provisions:

1.) The requirement of six feet of distance between persons in the courtroom is modified to require three feet of distance between persons in the courtroom, effective immediately.

2.) Courtroom capacity requirements are lifted, effective immediately. Judges retain the discretion to limit the number of people in a courtroom as health and safety conditions or circumstances necessitate while ensuring the courts remain open and accessible.

3.) The order requiring all persons wear facial coverings in the courthouse and courtroom is lifted, effective immediately. Although the use of facial coverings will no longer be required, continued use of facial coverings in compliance with current CDC guidelines is strongly encouraged. Judges retain the discretion to require the use of facial coverings generally or in specific cases, particularly cases involving persons in the courtroom who are at an elevated risk from COVID-19. Any person desiring to wear a facial covering shall be allowed to do so.

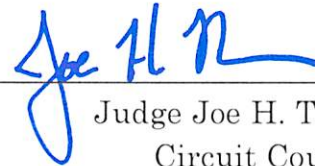
4.) Judicial districts, at their discretion, may modify their approved comprehensive written plans consistent with this order.

5.) Courts that have been conducting business by means other than in-person court proceedings should continue to do so. Courts that are not utilizing technology available to them to conduct business by means other than in-person court proceedings need to implement the use of telephone, teleconferencing, email, video conferencing, or other means that do not involve in-person contact. All of these methods should be the preferred option over in-person court proceedings to competently, promptly, and diligently perform judicial and administrative duties.

6.) Courthouse employees, who have not been vaccinated, because of their constant contact and interaction with the public, are strongly encouraged to continue their use of facial coverings.

Unless otherwise noted herein, the provisions of this order shall remain in place until further orders of this Court.

It is so ORDERED.



Judge Joe H. Thompson
Circuit Court Judge
Presiding Judge, 18th Judicial District