

STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN SUPREME COURT
ADM20-8001



**ORDER GOVERNING THE CONTINUING OPERATIONS OF THE
MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH**

O R D E R

The peacetime emergency declared in Minnesota in March 2020 has expired, and the requirement for face coverings in court facilities has been lifted. But in light of the continuing spread of COVID-19 and variants, recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention recommends that face coverings be worn indoors in public spaces in areas where there is “substantial” or “high” transmission of the virus.

The operations of the Minnesota Judicial Branch are currently governed by the order filed on June 28, 2021, which remains in effect through September 6, 2021. *Order Governing the Continuing Operations of the Minnesota Judicial Branch*, No. ADM20-8001, at 1 (Minn. filed June 28, 2021). Extending the June 28 order will provide certainty in scheduling to court administration and parties and allow more time to evaluate the next steps in the Judicial Branch’s continuing operations in light of public health guidance. Further, in order to continue the operations of the Minnesota Judicial Branch consistent with evolving conditions and public health guidance on the continued spread of COVID-19 and variants, some flexibility in implementing exposure prevention measures at the facilities and locations at which judicial branch proceedings are held will be useful.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. Notwithstanding paragraph 19 of the June 28 order, which superseded earlier orders requiring face coverings to be worn in court facilities and during court proceedings,

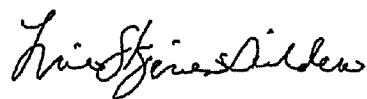
the chief judge of a district may require face coverings to be worn in public spaces in courthouse facilities where the public gathers, and the presiding judge, in consultation with the chief judge of the district, may require parties, participants, and those who attend an in-person proceeding to wear a face covering during the proceeding. Participants, for purposes of this paragraph, include jurors and the deliberations conducted by a jury. In the event that a county in which a courthouse is located mandates the use of face coverings in county-owned buildings, the district court in such counties will require the use of face coverings consistent with the county's decision, except that the presiding judge has the discretion to permit removal of face coverings for case-specific reasons.

2. In all in-person jury trials, the presiding judge, in consultation with the chief judge of the district, shall use as directed by State Court Administration appropriate screening and preliminary voir dire questions with summoned jurors to address concerns about serving on a jury because of COVID-19.

3. The order filed on June 28, 2021, governing the continuing operations of the Minnesota Judicial Branch is extended until further order by the Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. It is the specific intent of this paragraph that the requirements of the June 28, 2021 order will remain in effect after September 6, 2021 and until further order by the Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Dated: July 30, 2021

BY THE COURT:



Lorie S. Gildea
Chief Justice