

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

**Standing Order No. 2021-11**

**COURT OPERATIONS AND  
AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDER 2020-14**

On May 13, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), issued new guidance for persons fully vaccinated against COVID-19. In short, “fully vaccinated people may resume normal activities without wearing a mask and no longer have to physically distance, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.<sup>1</sup> On May 14, 2021, Virginia’s Governor lifted Virginia’s indoor mask mandate based on the CDC’s updated guidance, and announced he will ease all distancing and capacity restrictions on May 28, 2021.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the court’s operations have been carried out in accordance with the guidance of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the CDC, the Governor of Virginia, and other state and local health authorities to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus and protect the health and safety of everyone involved with court operations and court proceedings. To that end, Standing Order 2020-14 required (1) the wearing of face coverings or masks by visitors and other persons having business with the

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<sup>1</sup> See CDC Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html> (May 13, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> See Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Governor, press release at: <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2021/may/headline-895235-en.html> (May 14, 2021).

court, including employees, vendors, contractors, litigants, attorneys, law enforcement agents, and couriers when in public spaces within a courthouse; (2) the wearing of mask by employees of the Clerk's Office and Probation Office and by chambers staff within the court's internal space and offices; (3) maintaining physical distance whenever possible throughout a Western District of Virginia courthouse; (4) conducting a health self-assessment for signs of COVID-19 infection; (5) cleaning and sanitizing courtrooms between hearings; and (6) prohibiting entry of people infected by or exposed to COVID-19.

Based on the CDC's recently issued COVID-19 guidance, updated guidance from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, and after obtaining input from Virginia Department of Health officials in the Western District, the court has determined to modify these precautions and restrictions. Accordingly, Standing Order 2020-14 is **AMENDED**, in part, as follows:

1. **Face Coverings/Physical Distancing** – Fully vaccinated persons<sup>3</sup> are no longer required to wear a mask or physically distance in the public spaces of Western District of Virginia courthouses. **Persons who are not fully vaccinated are ORDERED to wear a mask and physically distance in the public spaces of Western District of Virginia courthouses.** Nothing in this order prohibits a person from choosing to wear a mask and physically distance at any time, regardless of vaccination status.

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<sup>3</sup> Individuals are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after they have received their second dose in a 2-dose series or two weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine. See May 20, 2021 Memorandum from Judge Roslynn R. Mauskopf, Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, <https://infoweb.ao.dcn/bcastpdf/DIR21-069.pdf>

This modified restriction applies as well to interior spaces in the Clerk's Office, Probation Office, and space used by the grand jury. In his or her discretion, a presiding judicial officer may require face coverings, including masks or shields, and physical distancing, during court proceedings or in judicial chambers.

2. **Prohibited Persons** – The temporary prohibition on entry to a Western District of Virginia courthouse by persons infected with or exposed to the COVID-19 virus is rescinded for those persons who are no longer symptomatic. Employees and visitors should continue to self-assess for illness, follow CDC and local health department guidance, and refrain from entering a Western District of Virginia courthouse if symptomatic for COVID-19 infection: fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; unusual fatigue; muscle or body aches; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; and nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
3. **Cleaning** – At the discretion of the presiding judicial officer, a courtroom will be cleaned and sanitized between hearings.

The remainder of Standing Order 2020-14, including supplements thereto, Standing Order 2020-15, as supplemented, Standing Order 2021-4, and Standing Order 2021-6, regarding the manner in which court proceedings will be handled, shall remain in effect.

It is so **ORDERED**.

Entered, this 24th day of May, 2021.



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Michael F. Urbanski  
Chief United States District Judge