

The Sixth Judicial Circuit Covid-19 Information and Updates

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Masks Are No Longer Required in Courtrooms

Masks will no longer be required in courtrooms in the Sixth Judicial Circuit as of Monday, Nov. 15, 2021, according to an administrative order issued this week by Chief Judge Anthony Rondolino. Social distancing won't be required either, according to the Nov. 10th order. Chief Judge Rondolino's directive came just days after the chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court ruled that the 20 judicial circuits in the state had to lift any mask mandates by the Nov. 15 date because of a variety of circumstances related to the coronavirus. The state's rates of COVID-19 transmission rates have been steadily decreasing. Effective vaccines are readily available, and 70 percent of the state's population has been partially or fully vaccinated. In addition, Chief Judge Rondolino notes that, according to the Florida Department of Health and a 7-day metric put together by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, both Pinellas and Pasco counties, the two that make up the sixth circuit, have dropped from severe community transmission to moderate. Technically, both the Florida Supreme Court's and Chief Judge Rondolino's administrative orders say that masks and social distancing are not required as of Nov. 15 in any part of any courthouse, but masks and social distancing have not been required outside courtrooms, in common areas, say, such as hallways, for some time in the sixth circuit. And, although masks are no longer required, anyone can wear one if they so choose. And anyone may ask for a mask upon entering a courtroom. They can also ask that they be socially distanced from others in a courtroom, and the presiding judge will consider whether such requests are appropriate at that particular proceeding.

To read Chief Judge Rondolino's administrative order in its entirety click

<https://www.jud6.org/LegalCommunity/LegalPractice/AOSAndRules/aos/aos2021/2021-045.pdf>

To read the Florida Supreme Court's administrative order click

<https://www.floridasupremecourt.org/content/download/801458/file/AOSC21-17-Amendment-2.pdf>

Remote Proceedings

With the Sixth Judicial Circuit's increasing use of the videoconferencing tool Zoom for some proceedings, we thought we should let you know that there are certain requirements. You can read about them by clicking here. [Using Zoom for Court Hearings](#). Anyone who is not a party in a proceeding, but who wishes to observe remotely via video, may do so as long as that type of proceeding is open to the public. An observer may not participate in the hearing in any way. The person wishing to observe must follow the protocol for video hearings and must contact the judge's office and request an invitation in order to be able to observe. For a list of proceedings that are not open to the public, [click here](#). **To familiarize yourself with Zoom, click here.** <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

Prepare ahead of time for a remote hearing. There is a handy video to guide you here. [Rules for Virtual Court Hearings](#)

The Florida Bar has worked hard to ensure nothing unprofessional occurs on the part of attorneys or pro se litigants during Zoom hearings, and, to that end, has put together a list of best practices and a video on the subject. To learn more, [click here](#)

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