

**15th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, ALABAMA**

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ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 11 RE: COVID-19 DELTA VARIANT

The Presiding Judge and the other local judges have consented that there is a need to implement safety measures based upon a resurgence of infections in the local area due to COVID-19 DELTA VARIANT in Montgomery, Alabama.

The following protocols shall be adhered to in the Montgomery County Courthouse and any **all** proceedings therein, including courtrooms, offices, judge's chambers, open areas, waiting rooms, restrooms, breakrooms, hallways, entry doors, and the like.

- A. To protect the health and safety of employees and the public the court enacts the following protections:
1. Employees will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms. Employees who feel sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms will not report to work. Employees who feel sick or display symptoms at work will be sent home.
 2. Employees in court facilities shall always maintain six feet distance from each other and wear a mask when such physical distance cannot be maintained. The court has taken the following steps to ensure proper social distancing and employee safety:
 - a. Placed physical barriers between workspaces that are not at least six feet apart.
 - b. Marked the floor in common spaces to indicate six feet intervals.
 - c. Required employees to wear a mask while in public spaces.
 - d. Required employees handling mail to wear a masks and gloves.
 - e. Implemented staggered hearing times to reduce crowd size and the risk of people gathering at starting and closing times.

- f. Implemented misting procedures before and courtroom use.
 - g. Limited the number of people on elevators to no more than two at a time.
 - 3. Employees will practice good hygiene by handwashing, frequent disinfecting of used items and surfaces, sneezing or coughing into a tissue or elbow, and avoiding touching their faces.
 - 4. Employees will not travel for non-essential business.
 - 5. Employees have been advised regarding COVID-19. The advice included good hygiene practices, updated personnel policies, and safety controls at the court facilities.
 - 6. Court facilities have posted signage emphasizing proper handwashing.
 - 7. Shared equipment will be cleaned and sanitized before each use. Examples of shared equipment include courtrooms, copiers, fax machines, and telephones used by more than one employee during a single shift or in consecutive shifts. This equipment should be wiped down with disinfectant or a disinfectant wipe between uses or misted with such disinfectant.
 - 8. The court will follow the CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting if the facility is exposed to COVID-19.
 - 9. The court is refining its contact tracing policy and will implement contact tracing procedures after receiving notification that the court facility has had confirmed exposure to COVID-19. These procedures will help the court identify and notify individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and will identify exposure locations that need to be cleaned and disinfected pursuant to CDC guidelines.
- B. After consultation with the proper authorities, the court is maintaining the following measures related to public entry into court facilities:
 - 1. The public will be screened by court personnel or security personnel UPON ENTERING the court building. Screening questions will include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Do you have a fever greater than 100.4 degrees? [If a touchless/contactless thermometer is available, a temperature check is strongly recommended in lieu of verbal confirmation.]

- b. Do you have a cough or worsening cough (excluding chronic cough due to known medical reason)?
 - c. Do you have shortness of breath?
- OR
- d. Do you have at least two of the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - e. Have you had any close contact in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - f. Have you traveled internationally or outside of Alabama in the last 14 days?

Any individual responding “yes” to the screening questions will not be allowed to proceed further into the courthouse. Screening personnel will notify the court of any individual who does not pass the screening procedure. If the person came to the court to file documents, the court would accept those documents for filing. If the person was scheduled to appear as a party or witness in a court proceeding, the court will work to reschedule the hearing/trial as a remote proceeding or to a future date when the person may pass courthouse screening. The court must provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to any personnel responsible for in-person screening.

- C. To facilitate increased activity in the courthouse, the court is using the following measures related to court proceedings:
 - 1. Proceedings will be conducted virtually to the maximum extent possible pursuant to current law and/or administrative order.
 - 2. In-person court proceedings will be allowed on a limited basis: (e.g., 10 attendees, require mask of all attendees, separate viewing area for non-parties, etc.).

3. Off-site visits with probationers and clients will continue but must adhere to CDC guidelines for COVID-19.
4. Large venues and common areas in the courthouse (e.g., courtrooms, jury assembly waiting areas, sit-down dining, etc.) will not be open for maximum use. Members of the public are required to wear facemask to the extent they can medically tolerate it. They will not be provided by the court prior to entry.
5. **Members of the public or staff who refuse to wear required face coverings or adhere to social distancing requirements may be asked to leave the court facility.**
6. **Any member of the public who is asked to leave the court facility must be offered an opportunity to conduct court business virtually, attend court proceedings virtually, file documents in an alternative manner, or confer with the Circuit Court Clerk to determine alternate arrangements for accessing the court.**

The court is regularly meeting with local judges and public health officials to monitor local public health conditions related to COVID-19 and is evaluating data to assess readiness to proceed to the next phase of court capacity.

Done this the 4th Day of August 2021.

/s/Johnny Hardwick,
Presiding Judge

This administrative order shall be submitted to the Circuit Court Clerk to spread this order on the minutes of the Court's record and a copy shall be delivered to the Administrative Director of Courts

CC: Dr. Rich Hobson
Hon. Terri Bozman-Lovell
All Judges of the 15TH Judicial Circuit
County Commission
Sheriff
District Attorney
Public Defender
Mayor
News Media