

**PRESIDING JUDGE'S ORDER
SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF ALABAMA**

STATE OF ALABAMA)
ETOWAH COUNTY)

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER REINSTATING THE USE OF
MASKS AT THE WILLIAM H. RHEA III JUDICIAL BUILDING**

WHEREAS, the undersigned Presiding Judge for the 16th Judicial Circuit having considered the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the current effect the delta variant is having on our state and county, information recently received from the Alabama Department of Public Health ("ADPH") and Etowah County Emergency Management Agency, and the current guidelines set forth by the ADPH and the CDC; and

WHEREAS, this Circuit further understanding it has a heightened duty to protect the citizens of this community who are summoned to court, whether as jurors fulfilling their civic duty who would otherwise not be at court, witnesses who are subpoenaed to court, attorneys and parties who have been ordered to court, law enforcement officers discharging their duties, and the employees who work with the public daily at the William H. Rhea III Judicial Building;

IT IS, THEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Beginning August 5, 2021, masks are hereby reinstated for all persons over the age of two (2), whether vaccinated or not, for entry into the William H. Rhea III Judicial Building here in the 16th Judicial Circuit, Etowah County, Alabama. The mask or face covering shall be sufficient to cover the individuals' nose and mouth.
2. Any person who is ill or experiencing any respiratory issues or fever shall not attend any court hearing, trial or proceeding, whether or not coronavirus is suspected. Attorneys shall inquire as to their clients' and witnesses' current health and if they are experiencing any symptoms or are currently diagnosed with COVID-19 and shall notify the Court before the date of the hearing if there is a medical issue.
3. Once all participants are prepared to proceed in the courtroom, the Judge presiding over the case has the option to modify the mask requirement set forth herein.
4. This Circuit will continue to comply with the CDC and ADPH safety requirements, including spacing for persons from different households inside and outside the courtrooms, regularly disinfecting frequently used items and surfaces inside and outside courtrooms, and providing sanitizing stations throughout the Judicial Building.

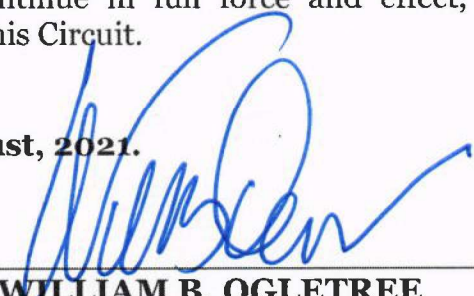
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CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

5. All dockets and cases, including jury trials shall proceed as scheduled. All Courts within the 16th Judicial Circuit shall continue to manage their respective cases and dockets to ensure appropriate spacing can be implemented.
6. All Courts within this Circuit are strongly encouraged to implement videoconferencing through the secure AlaCourt Virtual Hearing ("Zoom") Application when possible, consistent with applicable state laws.
7. This Administrative Order shall continue in full force and effect, unless otherwise rescinded or amended by this Circuit.

DONE and ORDERED this 5th day of August, 2021.



**WILLIAM B. OGLETREE
PRESIDING CIRCUIT JUDGE
16TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

**Cc: Hon. Tom Parker, Chief Justice
Dr. Rich Hobson, Director AOC
Hon. Steve Marshall, Attorney General
Hon. Cassandra Johnson, Circuit Clerk
Hon. Jody Willoughby, District Attorney
Hon. Jonathan Horton, Sheriff
16th Judicial Circuit – Circuit & District Judges
Hon. Scott Hassell, Probate Judge
Juvenile Referee / Domestic Referee
Etowah County Bar Association
State Probation Office, Etowah County
Etowah County Community Corrections
Etowah County Court Referral Office
Municipal Court Judges & Staff**

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AUG 05 2021
CASSANDRA "SAM" JOHNSON
CIRCUIT COURT CLERK