

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

In re:

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

GENERAL ORDER NO. 21-02

The COVID-19 public health crisis has sufficiently diminished to permit resumption of most pre-pandemic court operations and procedures. The United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio has reopened the courthouses in this district to the public, subject to health and safety protocols that apply in general public spaces in each building. Those general health and safety requirements are set forth in Amended General Order No. 2020-08-8 of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, which is available in its entirety on its website. For convenience of reference, the health and safety protocols established for general public spaces in each courthouse by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio are also set forth below.

The purpose of this General Order 21-02 is to set out the health and safety protocols that apply in the Bankruptcy Court's areas in the courthouses in the district that may be accessed by the public.

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS IN GENERAL PUBLIC AND COMMON AREAS IN COURTHOUSES

As set forth in the United States District Court's Amended General Order No. 2020-08, the following requirements apply in the general public and common areas in the

district's courthouses:

- A. Health screening (temperature checking and COVID-19 screening questions) may take place for admittance to a courthouse. Individuals will be denied entrance if they have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher or respond affirmatively to any COVID-19 screening question. Visitors denied entrance should contact by telephone the office to be visited in order to explore alternatives to entering the courthouse.
- B. The use of face masks is required for all individuals in a courthouse, unless otherwise directed by the Court or a courthouse official. The face mask must completely conceal the wearer's nose and mouth at all times. Visitors seeking entrance to a courthouse without a face mask will be asked to contact by telephone the office to be visited to explore alternatives to entering the courthouse.
- C. Physical distancing will be enforced in public and common areas.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS IN BANKRUPTCY COURT
PUBLIC AND COMMON AREAS IN DISTRICT COURTHOUSES

The following requirements apply in the specific public and common areas in the district's courthouses in which the bankruptcy court operates. Those areas include bankruptcy courtrooms and related spaces such as attorney witness and conference rooms, the Clerk's office intake areas and bankruptcy judges' chambers:

- A. Physical distancing will be enforced in the bankruptcy court's common areas, including Clerk's office intake areas and attorney and witness conference rooms.

- B. Each judge will continue to decide and communicate how court proceedings in matters assigned to her/him will occur, whether by telephone, by video, in-person, or a combination of methods. However, in-person courtroom proceedings and in-person chambers proceedings will be limited to the number of people which permits the observance of the physical distancing requirement of six feet in all instances. Bankruptcy judges will schedule in-person proceedings and access to them with consideration for these limits. Every courtroom in the district is different, so no uniform courtroom occupancy limit will be set.
- C. Regardless of vaccination status, the use of face masks is required for all individuals entering bankruptcy court public areas, including courtrooms. The face mask must completely conceal the wearer's nose and mouth at all times.
- D. At the discretion of the presiding judge, a participant(s) in a proceeding in the judge's courtroom may be permitted to remove her/his mask. Spectators in courtrooms must remain masked at all times. If an individual is uncertain about whether it is permissible to remove a mask in a courtroom, a question should be directed to the presiding judge or court staff. In deciding whether it is permissible for an individual to remove her/his mask in a courtroom, the presiding judge may inquire about the individual's vaccination status. The inquiry may be made under oath at the discretion of the presiding judge.

3. NOTICE OF ORDER

The Clerk of Court shall provide immediate notice to the public of this General

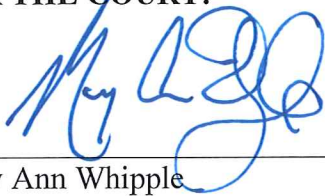
4. EFFECTIVE DATE AND DURATION OF ORDER

This General Order No. 21-02 is effective immediately. It will remain in effect until further Order of the Court.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: June 14, 2021

FOR THE COURT:



Mary Ann Whipple
Chief Judge