

**VIRGINIA:                    IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE CITY OF NORFOLK**

**IN RE:                    COURTHOUSE AND COURTROOM SAFETY IN RESPONSE TO  
COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

**ORDER**

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia having entered an Order dated May 6, 2020, extending the Declaration of Judicial Emergency, has directed courts to take certain procedures to protect the health and safety of the public and to minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19 from in-person court proceedings. It is therefore ORDERED:

I.        Entry into Courthouse

The following individuals are prohibited from entering this Courthouse if they have, within the previous 14 days:

1. traveled internationally;
2. been directed to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor;
3. been diagnosed with, or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with, COVID-19;
4. experienced a fever, cough, or shortness of breath; or
5. resided with or been in close contact with any person in the above-mentioned categories.

To enforce these restrictions, the Sheriff is authorized to question individuals seeking entry to assure that no prohibited persons are admitted. All members of the public are ORDERED to provide truthful responses to any such inquiries and to cooperate fully with the Sheriff's efforts to enforce this Order. Individuals who are not permitted to enter the Courthouse pursuant to this prohibition shall promptly contact the appropriate Clerk's office by telephone or other remote means to inform the Clerk of their business so they may receive further instruction regarding alternate arrangements for court access.

II.        Physical Distancing and Covering Face

Until public health officials advise the Court that in-person contact may be more broadly authorized and COVID-19 no longer presents a significant risk to public health and safety, the Court requires the following measures be followed to protect all courthouse users:

- 1,        Faces must be covered in all public spaces occupied by other members of the public, including the building lobby and metal detector areas, the public corridors, and public elevators. Faces may be uncovered only in spaces where physical distancing of six feet may be maintained.

2. Occupants and users of the Courthouse must maintain a physical separation from one another of six feet. Any signs indicating the maximum number of persons allowed in any room must be strictly followed.

3. Courtrooms will have markings for appropriately spaced seating. Courtroom users must sit only in the marked spaces. Exceptions may be made in the case of members of the same household.

4. Attorneys and their clients must also maintain a distance of six feet from one another, which will create obvious difficulties in communicating privately during courtroom proceedings. Attorneys should prepare their clients to communicate by writing notes rather than exchanging whispers, and they should make requests of the presiding judge for a brief recess when needing to speak privately with clients.

The Clerk of this Court is DIRECTED to post a copy of this Order on the Court's website and provide copies to all occupants of the Courthouse.

It is so ORDERED.

Entered this 13<sup>th</sup> day of May 2020

  
Chief Judge