

**IN THE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COURTS OF THE
SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

RE: Amended Courtroom Procedures In) **ORDER**
Removing COVID-19 Restrictions)

The Judges of the District and County Courts of the Seventh Judicial District have continually monitored public health considerations as these have changed on a daily basis over the course of the last fourteen months, and have attempted to adjust court operations to comply with potential courthouse closings and limitations of the number of people who were allowed to safely gather in a public place. In an effort to comply with the restrictions previously put in place, the Court provides as follows:

WHEREAS, the Nebraska Supreme Court has encouraged all Courts in the State of Nebraska to ease restrictions and attempt to return court proceedings, including jury trials, to a more regular schedule, while at the same time using the Court’s discretion as it applies to insuring public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 vaccinations have been made available for people of all ages who may want the vaccination. A majority of the people in Nebraska, as well as in the counties of the Seventh Judicial District, have been vaccinated for the novel coronavirus; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that individual counties within the Seventh Judicial District have provided for courtroom restrictions and implemented precautionary measures for their citizens over the past fourteen months; and

WHEREAS, the Judges of the Seventh Judicial District previously issued restrictions with regard to court proceedings on March 17, 2020, and on June 26, 2020, which have been in place since those dates, and which we now deem appropriate to amend.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Court orders the following amendment to the previous Orders, as follows:

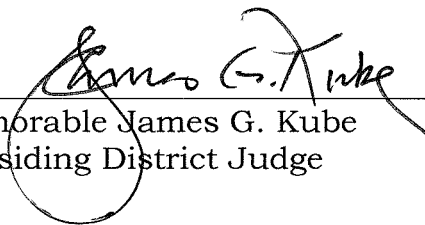
1. All court proceedings shall occur such that the safety restrictions put in place due to the COVID-19 outbreak shall no longer be required. There shall be no requirement to wear a facial mask or to socially distance during courtroom proceedings. However, face masks and hand sanitizers shall continue to be provided by the Court and be made available for use by court staff and/or members of the public who may want to use these on a voluntary basis. Use of these precautionary measures is strongly encouraged for those members of the population which have not been or have chosen not to be vaccinated. All plexiglas dividers which were installed as an added safety precaution in the courtroom, shall be removed.

2. Trials to the bench, or to a jury, shall occur without the need to select the jury in a larger venue, outside of the courthouse. Additionally, all aspects of trials shall resume their procedural form, with no face masks or social distancing required. For those members of the public who have not been or have chosen not to be vaccinated, use of face masks and hand sanitizers is strongly recommended. However, this general return to non-COVID-19 procedures shall be monitored and amended on a case-by-case basis, by the Judge presiding over the trial, in his or her discretion, after consideration of health and safety considerations of the jury members and the participants in the trial.

3. Videoconferencing shall occur on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the sitting judge, upon review of any relevant factors or health and safety considerations which may be presented. Legal counsel who wish to appear by videoconference must get prior court approval before appearing in such a manner, but ultimately, counsel are expected to appear in person with his or her client(s).

All of the District and County Court Judges of the Seventh Judicial District wish to extend their sincere appreciation to the court staff, security, attorneys, interpreters and members of the public for their cooperation and compliance with the Court's prior Orders, with regard to the COVID-19 restrictions previously implemented. Thank you all for helping to keep our Courts open and functioning in a safe manner for all those involved over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dated: May 19, 2021



Honorable James G. Kube
Presiding District Judge



Honorable Michael L. Long
Presiding County Judge