



Judicial Council of Georgia Administrative Office of the Courts

Chief Justice David E. Nahmias
Chair

Cynthia H. Clanton
Director

Memorandum

TO: Judicial Council Members and Partners
FROM: Chief Justice David E. Nahmias
RE: Updated Mask-Wearing Guidance
DATE: March 1, 2022

As you may have seen, last Friday, February 25, the CDC updated its mask-wearing guidance to advise that wearing masks in public indoor settings is needed only when COVID-19 cases are straining the healthcare system. Rather than relying only on COVID infection numbers, the CDC now looks to new COVID hospitalizations and current hospitalization levels as well as new infections to determine when mask-wearing is recommended. Under the new formula, most Georgia counties are now in the “low” or “medium” transmission categories for which general mask-wearing is no longer recommended. The new guidance applies to unvaccinated as well as vaccinated and boosted individuals. Mask-wearing remains recommended for persons emerging from quarantine or isolation due to exposure to or infection with COVID. And individuals may of course still choose to wear masks, which CDC recommends for certain people with higher risks of severe illness or in particular higher-risk settings. CDC also still recommends six-foot social distancing in public indoor settings, but only for people who are not up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations, especially if such people are at higher risk of getting very sick with COVID-19. The overall updated CDC guidance and a “COVID-19 County Check” link to determine the transmission level for any county can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>. More details on the updated mask policy can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>.

I encourage all Georgia courts, judges, and judicial agencies to review their COVID-19 operations plans to determine if revisions are appropriate in light of this updated public health guidance, particularly revisions that will allow greater use of court facilities to handle incoming and backlogged cases. As always, consultation with your local public health officials about local conditions and guidance may be useful. As COVID-19 conditions and related public health guidance continue to change, so too must our court operations, with the goal of providing the most efficient handling of cases while protecting the health of those who work in and visit our courthouses and other facilities.