

**District Court Judges**

Donald Hager  
Presiding Judge

Lolita G. Hartl Romanick  
District Judge

John A. Thelen  
District Judge

M. Jason McCarthy  
District Judge

Jay D. Knudson  
District Judge

**Juvenile Court**

Shawn Peterson  
Director of Juvenile Court  
(701) 787-2770

# State of North Dakota

## Northeast Central Judicial District

Grand Forks County  
124 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

Nelson County  
210 B Avenue West  
Lakota, ND 58344

**Court Administration**

Scott K. Johnson  
Trial Court Administrator  
(701) 787-2730

Kelly Hutton  
Assistant Trial Court Administrator  
(701) 787-2730

**Clerk's Office**

Alison Fiala  
Grand Forks County Clerk of Court  
Civil (701) 787-2715  
Criminal (701) 787-2700

Erin Fossen  
Nelson County Clerk of Court  
Phone (701) 247-2462  
Fax (701) 247-2412

Date: March 14, 2022

RE: COVID-19 courthouse protocol --- NECJD Procedural Order

To all counsel and courthouse personnel:

The Grand Forks County Commission has rescinded its mask mandate, and there appears to be a significant downward trend now of COVID/Omicron-related cases in Grand Forks County. While we return to a more normal operation with in-person hearings and trials, we will continue to conduct, by reliable electronic means ["REM"], non-evidentiary juvenile and civil pre-trial appearances and guardianship reviews. Parties, witnesses and counsel shall appear in-person on all other cases, unless the assigned judge authorizes appearance by REM.

The concern remains for the number of infected individuals at the Grand Forks County Correctional Center, not only in managing its housing, but also in the danger of infection spreading to or from those inmates from their in-person participation in court with the general public. To protect the safety and health of all persons, including the general public, the Court continues its order for all future appearances for GFCCC individuals shall be by Zoom, absent any objection raised by the defendant or his/her counsel. The judges shall ensure any defendant not waiving a REM appearance to be taken separately from the general public appearances, i.e...brought at the end of a session.

All specialty courts --- juvenile and adult drug courts, and domestic violence court --- shall be conducted by such means as determined by the assigned judges.

Mask wear remains discretionary in the courthouse, but subject to any changes directed by the CDC, the North Dakota Department of Health, the Grand Forks County Commission, and the Grand Forks County Health Department. Those persons who have been in close contact, or are currently exhibiting symptoms, or are known to be asymptomatic, are not to enter the courthouse, and should contact the clerk of court and advise them of their condition. The assigned judge may direct the court appearance be made by Zoom. If a person wants to pay fines, fees, etc., they should be directed to clerk's office telephone and/or website for instructions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Hager', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Don Hager  
Presiding Judge  
Northeast Central Judicial District