

Southeast Judicial District Policy for Facemasks in Courthouses

Effective June 22, 2020

Facemasks:

1. Cloth and disposable paper masks are acceptable for limiting the spread of COVID-19.
2. Types of cloth masks: Court Administration shall provide Clerks of District Court with masks. Employees may also wear their own purchased or home-made cloth mask. As per the CDC, cloth masks should: fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face; be secured with ties or ear loops; include multiple layers of fabric; allow for breathing without restriction; be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.
3. Disposable masks will be provided to all visitors at the entrances to the Courthouses.
4. **Visitors shall wear the masks provided throughout their stay in the Courthouse if required by county policy or if ordered by the court (unless they indicate they are unable to wear a mask).***
5. **Employees shall wear masks in the Courthouse as set forth by county policy and in the courtroom as directed by the court.**
6. This policy will remain in place until rescinded or amended.

* Please use your judgement in enforcement based on the following: “The court and county officials may have to consider if someone cannot wear a mask due to various reasons, and would consider offering to visitors if they request and if other physical distance measures cannot be maintained. The court would not support denying service based on mask use if physical distancing is able to be maintained. Reminder, that casual contact is not the issue, it is close contact of less than 6 feet for greater than 10 minutes, and would only require a mask in those instances”

The intent of the policy is to provide safety for court staff, county employees, and court participants in keeping with CDC guidelines and county policies. The use of facemasks within courtrooms lies within the sound discretion of the trial court judges. Judges may use their discretion to require the use of facemasks for court participants and staff and may require greater use of facemasks than county policy requires. Judges shall not loosen facemask requirements to any extent that would violate county policy.