

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF ILLINOIS**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2021-19
AUTHORIZING THE RELAXING OF SOCIAL DISTANCING MITIGATION
MEASURES IN THE CIRCUIT'S COURTHOUSES**

The Circuit Court for the Fifth Judicial Circuit of Illinois adopts the following administrative order pertaining to court operations during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus [COVID-19] pandemic:

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, the Illinois Supreme Court entered an Order - *In re: Illinois Courts Response to COVID-19 Emergency*, MR. 30370, directing all courts to establish and periodically update procedures to minimize potential exposure to and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on judicial operations, while continuing to provide access to justice, and subsequent to that date issued additional orders for safely resuming court operations;

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2021, the Illinois Supreme Court, in recognition of the elimination of capacity restrictions enacted per Executive Order of the Governor, and in consideration of the essential nature of the work of the courts and administrative efforts involved in resuming court operations and trials, entered an Order that provided in relevant part:

“... effective immediately ... the chief circuit judges of the State are no longer required to allow for appropriate social distancing as required by this Court’s order of May 20, 2020 and are permitted to relax or eliminate social distancing requirements. The decision to do so should be based on an assessment of local conditions;”

WHEREAS, the Chief Circuit Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit considers that the Presiding Judges of each County within the Circuit are in the best position to evaluate the local public health data and recommendations of local health agencies based upon that data within their respective counties, and determine whether public health conditions within the County permit a relaxation of social distancing measures within that County’s Courthouse, all with the goals of protecting the health and welfare of all Courthouse employees and patrons, while fulfilling the judiciary’s mission to protect the rights and liberties of the People by providing equal access to justice, resolving disputes, providing essential services to the citizens of the County, and attending the court’s administrative responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Circuit Judge, exercising general administrative and supervisory authority over the court, and acting on behalf of the Circuit Judges of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, adopts the following provisions as the order of the court:

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:

1. **Effective Date.** This administrative order is effective July 1, 2021 and its measures shall remain in effect until amended or modified by further order of the court.
2. **Intent of this Administrative Order.** The intent of this administrative order is to safely and conscientiously, and in a manner consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Illinois Department of Public Health, and local health agencies' guidance, expand activities that were restricted or limited pursuant to prior administrative orders of the court.
3. The Presiding Judges of each County within the Fifth Judicial Circuit are hereby granted discretionary authority to act for and on behalf of the Chief Circuit Judge in adopting policies, rules, and administrative orders which they deem appropriate for purposes of relaxing or eliminating any social distancing measures implemented within the courthouses of their respective counties pursuant to the Illinois Supreme Court's Order entered May 20, 2020. In exercising such authority and determining whether public health conditions within the County permit a relaxation of social distancing measures within their courthouses, each Presiding Judge shall evaluate the local public health data and recommendations of local health agencies based upon that data within their County.
4. **Miscellaneous.**
 - a. The court may issue further orders as necessary to address circumstances and conditions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, including re-assessing the provisions of this administrative order, to determine if additional measures are required to protect court personnel and the public.
 - b. It is further ordered that this administrative order be made available to the public.
 - c. The Clerks of the Circuit Court for each County within the Circuit shall post this administrative order on their websites.
 - d. This administrative order is effective *instanter*.

Dated: this 1st day of July, 2021



Thomas M. O'Shaughnessy, Chief Circuit Judge