

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 22, 2021

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## **Courts Adopt Renewed COVID-19 Measures to Protect Health and Safety**

The Idaho Supreme Court today ordered a number of COVID-19 precautions in courtrooms across the state, citing the current surge in cases and the harm it has done to Idaho's health care system.

Today's order supersedes a previous emergency order the Court issued June 25. Its elements, including a return to holding most court hearings online, take effect on Monday, Sept. 27.

The Court has issued similar orders throughout the pandemic, regularly updating them to reflect Idaho's situation and the latest science about the coronavirus. With the public's assistance, these orders have ensured Idaho's courts remain open to anyone who wishes to bring or defend a claim — while protecting the health and safety of court participants and staff.

Today's order includes the following:

- A statewide return to holding most court hearings online. Exceptions include all trials on a petition to terminate parental rights and all felony sentencing hearings. Courts must provide a publicly accessible livestream any time the public cannot be physically present in a courtroom for a proceeding traditionally open to the public.
- No new jury trials shall begin between Sept. 27 and Dec. 6. No new grand juries may be impaneled in that time, either. Existing trials or grand juries may be allowed to continue.
- Anyone in a publicly accessible space of a building used solely for court business must wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth and maintain six feet of social distance from people who do not live in their household. In a mixed-use building that contains both court and non-court operations, anyone entering a courtroom, a clerk's office or counter area, or other spaces used for court business must also follow the above rules.

- The order provides discretion for local administrative judges to take further steps to protect public health and safety.

The Court in its order noted jury trials are already temporarily suspended in most Idaho counties due to the current surge in COVID-19 cases. “This dramatic increase has overburdened Idaho’s health care system,” the order states. “... In light of these concerning developments, we have concluded that further modification of our emergency orders is now warranted.”

The order (and all previous COVID-19 judicial emergency orders) can be viewed by visiting [isc.idaho.gov](https://isc.idaho.gov) and selecting "State Judicial Emergency Orders Regarding COVID-19" on the home page.

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