

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Feb. 18, 2022

Contact: Nate Poppino
Phone: 208-296-9055
Email: npoppino@idcourts.net

Supreme Court Gives Judicial Districts More Oversight of COVID-19 Precautions

Idaho's administrative district judges will determine what courtroom COVID-19 precautions are appropriate for conditions in their parts of the state, the Idaho Supreme Court ordered Thursday.

The new emergency order, effective Feb. 28, is the latest in a series governing state court operations — protecting health and safety while ensuring Idaho's courts remain open to anyone who wishes to bring or defend a claim.

The order further empowers administrative judges in Idaho's seven judicial districts to take appropriate steps based on local conditions to limit coronavirus risk for people conducting court business. These administrative district judges were already able to order local actions to reduce transmission risk; this order now gives them full discretion over health precautions including use of masks, social distancing, and whether jury trials and grand jury proceedings take place.

The order adjusts other court rules. It limits the number of peremptory challenges attorneys may use to dismiss potential jurors during jury selection. Rules allowing a judge to be disqualified without cause remain suspended, as do rules prohibiting hearing cases remotely.

As before, no one in the portion of a courthouse where court business is conducted can be asked to remove a mask against their wishes, except for a testifying witness.

Thursday's order supersedes a previous order issued Nov. 29, 2021. It can be found on the Idaho Supreme Court's homepage (isc.idaho.gov) under "State Judicial Emergency Orders Regarding COVID-19."

####