
Rescinding/Amending COVID-19 Circuit Court Operating Plan

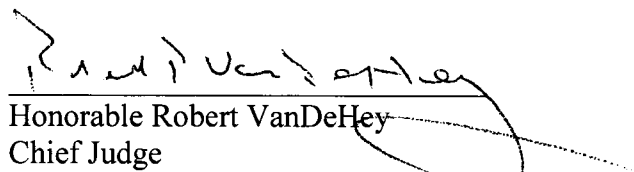
WHEREAS: On May 21, 2021, the Wisconsin Supreme Court terminated the following orders: (1) In re the Matter of Jury Trials During the COVID-19 Pandemic—Amended (S. Ct. Order issued March 22, 2020; Amended April 15, 2020); (2) In re the Matter of Filing of Court Documents in Circuit and Appellate Courts (Temporary Mailbox Rule) (S. Ct. Order issued April 13, 2020); (3) Interim Rule 20-02; and In re the Matter of the Extension of Orders and the Interim Rule Concerning Continuation of Jury Trials, Suspension of Statutory Deadlines for Non-Criminal Jury Trials, and Remote Hearings During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Amended Order) (S. Ct. Order issued October 1, 2020).

WHEREAS: The Wisconsin Supreme Court “no longer requires that personal masking, social distancing, and sanitizing court facilities be part of any plan for circuit court and municipal court proceedings approved by the chief judge of the applicable judicial district. Instead, circuit courts and municipal courts, with the approval of the applicable chief judge, shall make county-wide decisions about what is in the best interest of circuit court and municipal court operations, respectively. This includes deciding whether or not to continue to require masking, social distancing, and sanitizing court facilities on a county by county basis.”

WHEREAS: The Circuit Court Judge has determined that it is in the best interest of the circuit court operations for Pierce County to amend its existing COVID-19 Court Operational Plan, dated February 4, 2021.

THEREFORE: The COVID-19 Court Operational Plan for Pierce County is hereby amended.

Date: May 26, 2021


Honorable Robert VanDeHey
Chief Judge
Seventh Judicial Administrative District

Pursuant to directive from the Chief Justice's Wisconsin Courts COVID-19 Task Force Final Report dated May 2020, Pierce County established the following committees and subcommittees: Stakeholder Group Committee, Staffing and Facilities Subcommittee, Resumption of In-Person Appearances Subcommittee, Resumption of Jury Trials Subcommittee, Recovery Planning Jury Committee and Recovery Planning Jury Subcommittee.

Members include: Honorable Elizabeth Rohl, Court Commissioner Jorv Gavic, Clerk of Court Kerry Feuerhelm, Clerk of Court Deputy/Jury Clerk Pam Hines, Public Defender Liesl Nelson, DA Halle Hatch, County Administrator Jason Matthys, Corporation Counsel Brad Lawrence, Public Health Supervisor AZ Snyder, Private Bar Attorneys Lars Loberg and Phil Helgeson, Department of Corrections Supervisor Mark Lemke, Maintenance Supervisor Jerry Forss, Information Services Supervisor Janet Huppert, Pierce County Sergeant Chad Koranda, Court Security Officer Kellen Langer, Emergency Management Supervisor Christine McPherson, Children, Youth and Families Program Manager Joy Lynn George and Jennelle Wolf.

PIERCE COUNTY COVID-19 CIRCUIT COURT OPERATING PLAN

In light of updated CDC recommendations and the May 21, 2021 Supreme Court Order, the Pierce County COVID-19 Task Force convened to amend Pierce County's Operational Plans. Based upon that discussion, the Operation Plan will be amended as follows:

1. Pierce County Public Health currently has a mask advisory order that requires unvaccinated individuals to wear masks. This order is in effect through June 4, 2021.
2. In line with that order, unvaccinated individuals in the courthouse and courts are required to wear masks. Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear masks.
3. Effective June 7, 2021, masks will be recommended for unvaccinated individuals but not required.
4. The social distancing requirements will be rescinded effective immediately.
5. The hybrid model of in-person/remote hearings will continue. Effective July 6, 2021 all matters will return to in-person appearances unless other permission has been granted from the courts. Any matters already scheduled as remote appearances will continue in the manner they have been scheduled.
6. Plexiglass dividers will remain in the courtroom at the discretion of the Court.
7. Hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes will be available in the courtrooms.
8. Information will be provided to prospective jurors regarding the status of Pierce County's Operational Plan. Prospective jurors can ask to be excused if they have health concerns.