IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI
16th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, STATE OF MISSOURI

In Re: COVID-19 Precautionary Measures

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2022- 025

WHEREAS, as a result of and in response to the spread of COVID-19, various executive orders and emergency orders from all levels of government have previously been issued which closed or limited certain governmental functions. However, said Orders also provided that Court operations were deemed to be essential governmental services and, therefore, the Court remained open and operational during the term of said Orders, performing core judicial functions, often through remote technologies including video and telephone hearings and conferences; and

WHEREAS, the 16th Judicial Circuit Court operates in the following buildings:

(1) Downtown Courthouse, 415 East 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64106-2706;

(2) Eastern Jackson County Courthouse, 308 W. Kansas, Independence, MO 64050;

(3) Family Court Division, 625 E. 26th Street, Kansas City, MO 64108;

(4) Albert Reiderer Community Justice Complex, 1315 Locust, Kansas City, MO 64106;

(5) Community Justice Building, 1305 Locust, Kansas City, MO 64106.

These five buildings being collectively referred to herein as "Court Buildings;" and

WHEREAS, throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic the Court has followed policies and directives issued by Jackson County relating to mask-wearing and other COVID-19 protocols in County Buildings, including the wearing of masks by Court staff and visitors while in public areas and non-enclosed workspaces of Court Buildings; and

WHEREAS, the Court has been informed that starting the week of March 7, 2022 Jackson County will be following the COVID-19 Community Levels provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which utilizes a LOW, MEDIUM and HIGH level, and which will indicate on a weekly basis the precautionary requirements for associates and visitors in County buildings; and

WHEREAS, and subject to the other provisions of this Administrative Order, the Court will adopt the same weekly precautionary requirements now followed by the County for all Court Buildings; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 478.240.2, RSMo, and Article V, Section 15 of the Missouri Constitution, the Presiding Judge has general administrative authority over all judicial personnel and court officials in the Circuit as well as administrative authority over dockets of the Court and the administrative and discretionary authority regarding the manner in which any

hearings are conducted in the Court,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, effective immediately, as follows:

1. Every Friday, Jackson County will provide the Court with a report indicating the Jackson County COVID-19 Community Level that will be in effect for the following week. The Court will post the Community Level (LOW, MEDIUM or HIGH) on its website at www.16thcircuit.org.

2. For weeks when the COVID-19 Community Level is LOW, the following precautionary measures will be in effect for all Court Buildings: (a) Mask wearing – The Court *will not* require Court staff and visitors to wear masks in Court facilities/workspaces, regardless of vaccination status. Wearing masks will be optional; (b) Temperature screener machines at Court Building entrances – the use of these machines *will not* be required of persons entering the building.

3. For weeks when the COVID-19 Community Level is MEDIUM, the following precautionary measures will be in effect for all Court Buildings: (a) Mask wearing – The Court *will not* require Court staff and visitors to wear masks in Court facilities/workspaces, regardless of vaccination status. Wearing masks will be optional; (b) Temperature screener machines at Court Building entrances – the use of these machines *will* be required of persons entering the building.

4. For weeks when the COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH, the following precautionary measures will be in effect for all Court Buildings: (a) Mask wearing – The Court *will* require Court staff and visitors to wear masks in Court facilities/workspaces, regardless of vaccination status; (b) Temperature screener machines at Court Building entrances – the use of these machines *will* be required of persons entering the building.

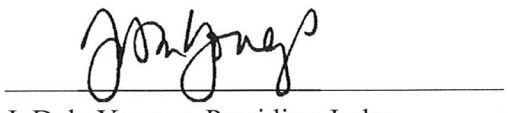
5. Community Levels may change week to week. All Court staff and visitors who enter any Court Building must be prepared to follow the Community Level requirements applicable for each week and have masks on hand if required to wear them in Court Buildings and workspaces.

6. Notwithstanding the above, individual judicial officers may require mask wearing within their chambers and courtrooms when the Community Level is LOW or MEDIUM if *specific and articulable circumstances* cause them to conclude that such a requirement is necessary to ensure the health and safety of any Court employee. Judicial Officers shall continue to be encouraged to utilize all available technologies, including teleconferencing and video conferencing, for hearings and conferences as lawful and appropriate.

7. Municipal Divisions operating within the 16th Judicial Circuit shall operate pursuant to the terms of this Administrative Order, but may impose more restrictive requirements as the circumstances in their communities may dictate.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

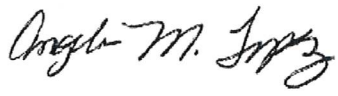
March 7, 2022



Date

J. Dale Youngs, Presiding Judge

Certificate of Service

This is to certify that a copy of the foregoing was emailed to the following on March 7, 2022:

Missouri Supreme Court
16th Circuit Court Judiciary and Staff
Frank White, County Executive
Troy Schulte, County Administrator
Members of the County Legislature
Darryl Forte', Sheriff
Captain Chuck DeGroff, Jackson County Sheriff's Department
Mary A. Marquez, Court Administrator
Jean Peters-Baker, Jackson County Prosecutor
Ruth Petsch, District Defender, Office of the Public Defender
All Municipal Courts
Bar Associations located within the 16th Judicial Circuit