

MEMO

TO: Judges, Clerks, Court Security Personnel, Attorneys and Litigants

FROM: Jill Bartee Ayers, Presiding Judge
Ken Goble, Montgomery County General Sessions Court Presiding Judge
Joel Perry, Robertson County General Sessions Court Judge

RE: **Temporary Policy for Face Coverings 19th Judicial District**

DATE: July 8, 2020

Based on the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Montgomery and Robertson Counties, in order to protect those who use the court system and those who work in and around court, consistent with the Executive Orders of the Montgomery County and Robertson County Mayors, the following decision has been made regarding face coverings in the courtrooms:

I. In the 19th Judicial District, the court procedures for reopening which were approved by the TN Supreme Court on April 29, 2020, May 2, 2020 and June 9, 2020, shall remain in full force and effect *except* on the issue of face coverings as set out herein. Beginning **Monday, July 13, 2020**, the wearing of face coverings shall be required for all persons in the courtrooms.

The following are exceptions to this temporary policy: face coverings may be temporarily removed by a witness who is giving testimony, by attorneys as they address the court, and judges and clerks seated in the courtroom during court who are adequately social distanced. Additionally, exceptions noted in the referenced Executive Orders will be recognized.

Each judge will continue to have the authority to require face coverings to be worn at all times in his/her courtroom at his/her discretion.

II. This policy shall be announced in the courtrooms and any person after having been personally admonished by the court to wear a face covering may be ordered to leave the premises and/or be punished for contempt. Each judge is charged with enforcement of the above in his/her courtroom.

III. Attorneys should encourage their clients to bring and wear their own face coverings. The 19th Judicial District in conjunction with Montgomery and Robertson Counties will work diligently to provide face coverings for those litigants who appear in the courtrooms without them; however, please be mindful that at times demand may exceed supply.

IV. All courts will continue to use technology to take up cases via video and teleconferences when possible.

V. This temporary policy shall remain in effect until August 1, 2020 unless otherwise extended.