

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
PROTOCOLS FOR REOPENING
COURTHOUSES AND RESUMING NORMAL OPERATIONS
REVISED AND EFFECTIVE ON MARCH 1, 2022

I. Guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A. To the greatest extent possible, the guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) shall apply in all Northern District Court buildings.

The guidance may be found at the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

II. Building Screening Procedures.

A. Jurors/Grand Jurors/Attorneys/Contractors/General Public/Case Participants:

1. All persons will have their temperature taken once each day prior to being granted access to any Northern District Court building. Any person whose temperature is 100.4°F or higher will be denied access to the building.

2. All persons will be required to complete a questionnaire, under penalty of perjury, before being granted access to any Northern District Court building. The questionnaire will make certain inquiries related to the person’s recent exposure to COVID-19 and will, to the extent possible, be consistent with the Quarantine and Isolation guidance issued by the CDC.

That guidance may be found at the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>.

a. Any person who is required to quarantine or isolate per that guidance will be denied access to the building.

B. Employees¹:

1. Employees should monitor their own temperature each day prior to entering any United States District Court building. Employees shall immediately notify their supervisor if they:

a. experience a temperature of 100.4°F or higher;

b. test positive for COVID-19;

c. live with anyone who tests positive for COVID-19;

d. have come in close contact with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 5 days; or

¹ “Employees” shall include all persons working for any Court unit inside any Northern District Court building.

- e. begin experiencing any symptoms for COVID-19, including but not limited to fever, chills, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing.
2. Upon arrival at any Northern District Court building, employees will have their temperature taken once each day. Any employee whose temperature is 100.4°F or higher will not be granted access to the building.
3. All employees should review the above-referenced Quarantine and Isolation guidance issued by the CDC. Any employee who is required to quarantine or isolate based upon that guidance shall not enter any Northern District Court building. If an employee is required to quarantine or isolate, the employee shall be permitted to return to work only once the employee completes the quarantine or isolation requirement.

III. Personal Protective Equipment.

A. Face Coverings.²

1. All persons including employees, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, the general public, contractors, or any others, inside any Northern District Court building must wear face coverings when:
 - a. entering any of the buildings;
 - b. in common areas, including but not limited to elevators, hallways, stairwells, and restrooms; and
 - c. in courtrooms.
2. Employees should consult with their supervisor as to whether a face covering must be worn in their office or personal work area.
3. Employees are encouraged to be cognizant of, and accommodating of, the health conditions and concerns of others with whom they have close contact.

IV. Implementation and Maintenance of Social Distancing.

- A. All persons inside any of the buildings, including employees, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, the general public, contractors, or any others, shall make every effort possible to maintain a minimum distance of at least six feet between all other persons.
- B. If it is not possible for persons to maintain a distance of at least six feet between themselves and other persons, such persons must wear a face covering.

V. Trials and Grand Jury Proceedings.

- A. Trials and grand jury proceedings present unique circumstances where a uniform approach is not practical. To the greatest extent possible, trials and grand jury

² The requirements set forth in Section III(A) shall apply to all persons regardless of vaccination status.

proceedings will be conducted in accordance with the guidance provided by the CDC.

- B. Prior to the commencement of a jury trial or a bench trial, attorneys should communicate with the chambers of the presiding Judge with specific questions and to ascertain that Judge's expectations and rules.
- C. Questions regarding grand jury proceedings should be directed to the Chief Judge.

VI. Applicability to Contractors.

- A. Contractors permitted to work in any Northern District Court building are subject to all the same screening protocols as the general public, as well as additional protocols required by GSA and/or the Court.

VII. Reporting Positive Tests or Exposure.

- A. If any person, including but not limited to employees, attorneys, jurors, or contractors, tests positive for COVID-19 within five days after having been in any court building, such person shall notify the Court of the positive test result. The notification should be made as soon as possible and will be deemed confidential.

VIII. Continuation of Teleworking Policy.

- A. Employees may still be permitted to telework at the discretion of their supervisor. All employees should consult with their supervisor regarding their specific circumstances.

IX. Miscellaneous.

- A. These Revised Protocols will become effective on March 1, 2022 and will thereafter be reevaluated periodically.
- B. Signs will be placed throughout all buildings reminding all persons to practice social distancing and stringently follow good hygiene practices.
- C. These Revised Protocols will be posted on the Court's website and are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of the Court.