

**COVID-19 Circuit Court Safety Plan for Oneida County Addendum:
Resumption of In Court Proceedings and Amendment to COVID-19 Safety Plan**

As an addendum to the Safety Plan filed with and approved by the Chief Judge of the Judicial District dated June 26, 2020, and the addendum dated August 24, 2020, relative to jury trials, the circuit courts of Oneida County will implement the following amendments to those plans:

1. Judges and court staff shall perform their functions in the courtroom.
2. Judges and court staff who perform their functions behind plexiglass shall not be required to wear face coverings. All other individuals in the courtroom shall continue to be required to wear face coverings.
3. Court proceedings may be conducted remotely, with the exception of evidentiary hearings, initial appearances in criminal cases, and sentencing hearings in criminal cases, which may be conducted remotely with the approval and pursuant to the discretion of the Judge, taking into consideration constitutional and statutory requirements, the nature of the proceedings and requests of the attorneys and litigants.
4. Social distancing shall not be required in the courtroom, though attorneys, litigants and the general public are encouraged to do so as space may permit.
5. County cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the courthouse pursuant to the current policy of the Oneida County Buildings and Grounds Department. Court staff will no longer be responsible for cleaning the courtroom between morning and afternoon proceedings. Disinfectant wipes and disinfectant spray will continue to be available for cleaning between hearings.
6. The jury selection process will be conducted in the courtroom, the jurors shall occupy the jury box during the selection process and during trial, and will occupy the jury room during recesses and deliberations. Jurors may be released from the courthouse during lunch breaks. Screening for COVID-19 risks will continue, including taking the temperatures of potential jurors using a non-intrusive thermometer by court staff or as otherwise designated by the Judge. The questionnaires shall be sealed by the Judge and are not to be made available to the public. The questionnaires shall be destroyed at the conclusion of the case.
7. Oneida County Circuit Court Judges shall have full authority to add, remove or modify the requirements set forth in these amendments and the June 26, 2020, and August 24, 2020, Orders on a case-by-case basis, as they deem appropriate in light of the particular circumstances of individual court proceedings, and the requests of attorneys and litigants, pursuant to their own discretion.

The undersigned represent that they have conferred with Brenda Behrle, Clerk of Oneida County Circuit Court, regarding these amendments to the June 26, 2020, and August 24, 2020, Orders, and that she is in agreement with these amendments.

Dated: May 28, 2021



Hon. Patrick F. O'Melia
Oneida County Circuit Court, Branch I

Dated: May 28, 2021



Hon. Michael H. Bloom
Oneida County Circuit Court, Branch II