

COVID-19 Circuit Court Safety Plan for Oneida County

Phases One and Two — 9th Judicial District

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, the courts of Oneida County will implement the following protective measures:

General

1. The county judiciary has established a stakeholder's committee, including the Judiciary/Commissioners, County Public Safety Committee Chairperson, Corporation Counsel, District Attorney, Public Defender, County Sheriff, Clerk of Court, Buildings & Facilities Director, County Health Officer, Court Security, and Emergency Government represented by the Sheriff's Department. The committee and sub parts of it have met regularly to discuss and consider the recommendations outlined in the Wisconsin COVID-19 Task Force report. The procedures and practices that follow were developed with the intent to be proactive, recognizing the need to provide all constitutional and statutory protections to the litigants and interested parties, as well as the public's right to access. It is understood that it is not possible to ensure absolutely safety, but expected to take reasonable and necessary precautions to protect the health of all participants within the physical limitations of the facilities and resources of the courts and county.
2. In order to limit the number of persons in the courtrooms, it is the intent of the judiciary that every judge will use best efforts to continue to conduct all appropriate proceedings remotely.
3. Before calendaring in-person hearings, the stakeholder's committee has addressed staffing needs and has procured any equipment and supplies deemed necessary. It is understood that the availability of equipment and supplies is fluid given ongoing supply and demand issues. The stakeholders will use best efforts to secure that which is necessary to satisfy the requirements of this plan.
4. The stakeholder's subcommittee will continue to meet regularly, maintain communication with the local health authority and the county office of risk management, and will adjust this operating plan as necessary with any changes in the public health conditions in the county.
5. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 29, 2020.

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will continue to do so, whenever possible.
2. In accordance with the Supreme Court Order dated May 22, 2020, court staff and all individuals in the courtroom will be required to wear face coverings as specified therein, practice social distancing, and practice hygiene recommendations. Signage incorporating these requirements will be posted in appropriate locations to ensure notice and compliance.

Scheduling

1. Judges will use best efforts to conduct proceedings remotely. In-person proceedings will be conducted as determined by the Judge, taking into consideration constitutional and statutory requirements, the nature of the proceedings and requests of the attorneys and litigants.
2. Court staff will use staggered scheduling of in person proceedings and other appropriate methods to reduce the number of individuals in a courtroom at one time.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations.
2. Each judge will include information on orders setting hearings, dockets, notices, and in other communications notifying individuals who are in vulnerable populations of the ability to contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations.
3. Judges will use best efforts to accommodate vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court by offering remote access via Zoom video and phone conferencing, staggering scheduling to limit the number of individuals in the courtroom and sequestering of individuals from the courtroom as appropriate. If such accommodations cannot be met, reasonable adjournments will be made.

Social Distancing

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court building will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet. Signage reminders will be displayed throughout the facilities in appropriate locations to ensure notice and compliance.
2. Oneida County has determined occupancy for the elevator and has posted appropriate signage on the door of the elevator on each floor.

Gallery

3. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
4. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.

Well

5. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk and court reporter stations have been separated by plexiglass barriers.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at strategic locations throughout the court buildings.
2. Hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes or spray and paper towels will be placed in a "cleaning station" set up in the courtroom. Signage will be posted outside of the courtroom as to the availability of these items in the courtroom.
3. Flyers outlining appropriate hygiene, social distancing, or public safety have been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.
4. Courtroom doors will be propped open while court is in session to reduce frequent touching of door handles.
5. Air purifiers have been installed in each courtroom.

Screening

1. Signage posted at public entrances of the court buildings will encourage individuals to wear a mask, and give notice that they are to immediately exit the building if they have any of the following: Fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, contact with a COVID-19 patient within the last 14 days and/or travelled by plane within the last 14 days. Further, an individual must leave the building if they have three or more of the following: cough, muscle pain or body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of taste or smell. If an individual must leave and was required to appear in court, the Judge will grant a reasonable adjournment upon being notified and after consideration of their circumstances. A copy of the signage is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
2. In accordance with the Supreme Court Order dated May 22, 2020, court staff and all individuals in the courtroom will be required to wear face coverings as specified herein, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations. Signage incorporating these requirements will be posted in appropriate locations to ensure notice and compliance. Noncompliance will be enforced by the Judge. However, in the event an individual does not have a face covering, one will be provided by the county as set forth herein under Face Coverings.
3. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building will be screened by the Oneida County Sheriff's Department for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to transport. Inmates with symptoms will not be transported to the court building.

Face Coverings

1. In accordance with the Supreme Court Order dated May 22, 2020, court staff and all individuals in the courtroom will be required to wear face coverings as specified therein. Signage incorporating these requirements will be displayed in appropriate locations to ensure notice and compliance. Noncompliance will be enforced by the judge.
2. Individuals coming to court will be strongly encouraged to bring their own face coverings with them. For individuals required to appear in court, orders to appear and docket notices will include the notice of the requirement of face coverings in accordance with the Supreme Court Order dated May 22, 2020. In the event an individual required to appear in court and whose matter can only be heard in person fails to bring or have a face covering, one will be provided by the county. Signage will be posted as to the availability of a face covering.

Cleaning

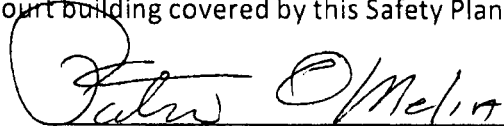
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 24 hours.
2. Each courtroom will have a cleaning station supplied with hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, disinfecting spray, towels and disposable gloves. Court staff will spray and wipe the counsel tables and audio equipment with disinfectant between morning and afternoon proceedings. Disinfectant wipes and disinfectant spray will be available on counsel table for cleaning between hearings.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

1. It is understood that public awareness of these measures is necessary. This information will be shared through the county website, local bar associations, and any other appropriate public sources of information.

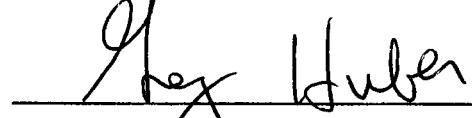
I have conferred with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Safety Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the stakeholders committee. A list of members on the committee and the frequency in which they will continue to meet is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Safety Plan will conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 6/26/2020



Presiding Judge

Date: 6/26/2020



Chief Judge Approval

LIST OF ATTENDEES - STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

Judges Patrick F. O'Melia, Michael H. Bloom

Michael Timmons, County Public Safety Committee Chairperson

Linda Conlon, County Health Officer

Michael Schiek, District Attorney

Jillian Pfeifer, Assistant District Attorney

Mary L. Roth Burns, Public Defender

Brenda Berhle, Clerk of Court

Grady Hartmann, Oneida County Sheriff

Brian Desmond, Corporation Counsel

David Seefeldt, Court Security/Emergency Management