

FILED SEP 30 2021

By



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE OSAGE NATION
PAWHUSKA, OKLAHOMA

In re:

COVID-19 Precautionary Measures
through January 10, 2022

Administrative Order No. AO-2021-08

The Chief Justice issues this administrative order to address health and safety issues posed by COVID-19 variants and to preserve the health and safety of court personnel and the Osage community.

Tribal courts across the state have re-implemented measures to protect the public and court personnel in response to COVID-19 delta variant's substantially increased transmissibility rate, hospitalizations, lethality and stress upon health systems. With the rise in COVID-19 cases due to the spread of the delta variant and the comparatively low vaccination rate of the community, the Osage Nation Judicial Branch previously consulted with the Chief Medical Officer of the Wah-Zha-Zhe Health Center, who recommended continuing the precautionary measures already in place. Therefore, it is appropriate to continue precautionary measures to protect court personnel and court customers.

IT IS ORDERED, the following measures shall remain in place **through January 10, 2022.**

1. Court Facility

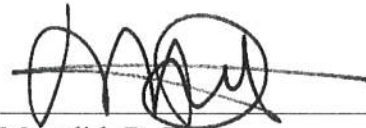
- a. There will be limited access to the building where the Court offices are located. Signs will be posted directing individuals to the public's entrance.
- b. Court offices will remain closed to the general public except by appointment only. Court customers who wish to do business at the court must call the Court Clerk's Office at (918) 287-5400 to schedule an appointment. Court personnel shall take reasonable steps to resolve court patron inquiries and shall only schedule appointments when the inquiry cannot be resolved remotely.
- c. Persons may not congregate in the lobby for court business and must wait outside the Court building.
- d. Court personnel shall minimize physical contact with each other.
- e. All Court personnel shall always wear masks in the office, except for brief periods when eating or drinking.

2. Filing: Except by appointment, filings and other business with the courts shall occur in accordance with the *Notice* issued with prior administrative orders.
3. Court Appointments: Court Clerks must take all reasonable steps to address any inquiries remotely and shall only schedule appointments when the inquiry cannot be resolved without the individual coming to the Court facility.
 - a. Only one person at a time may conduct business at Court offices by appointment. Individuals accompanying the person doing business at the Court must wait outside of the Court building. An exception will be made for companions providing physical assistance or interpretive services to the person doing business at the Court, and for attorneys of record, domestic violence advocates, victim advocates, and court-appointed special advocates accompanying the party.
 - b. All persons will be required to use hand sanitizers prior to approaching Court offices.
 - c. Persons doing business at the Court shall wear a face mask prior to approaching the Court offices. Disposable masks will be available.
 - d. Court personnel must wear masks when interacting with members of the public who do business at the Court. Court staff shall use hand sanitizers prior to and after interacting with the public and prior to and after hearings.
 - e. Court personnel shall wipe down the Clerk's service window and other surfaces that come into contact with a member of the public.
4. Scheduled Hearings/Trials:
 - a. Trial Court judges shall continue to issue all necessary orders after balancing the interests of justice and public health and safety.
 - b. All hearings shall be conducted by telephone or videoconference, when available.
 - c. Only named parties to a matter may attend telephonic or videoconference hearings. Non-parties will be directed to exit the phone call or videoconference.
 - d. To limit the number of parties waiting for a docket in the lobby, all future hearings shall be scheduled by assigning a date and time unique to a case, allotting sufficient time for the presiding judge to conduct the hearing.
 - e. Judges who conduct hearings on a regular court day should use their discretion on whether to preside over the hearing at the Court offices or conduct such hearings telephonically or by videoconference, taking precautionary measures to protect public health and safety.
 - f. Hearings for newly filed cases shall be scheduled 60 days out unless the law requires an earlier date.
 - g. No jury trials shall be conducted until the Chief Judge of the Trial Court and the Chief Justice have an approved plan to conduct jury trials while taking appropriate safety measures.

5. Personal appearances/attendance:
 - a. To minimize exposure to Judicial Branch personnel, physical Court appearances by parties shall not be permitted. All parties shall make arrangements to appear by telephone or videoconference, when available. If a party cannot appear by telephone or videoconference, the party should contact the Court Clerk's office as soon as possible.
 - b. The court room will be sanitized when persons other than Court personnel are present in the court room.
6. The Court Administrator is authorized to close the court offices on an emergency basis upon a determination that a health risk exists and to take appropriate measures to secure the safety of the court staff and court patrons.
7. The following persons are not permitted to enter the Judicial Branch offices, including the court room: (1) Persons who have recently been diagnosed with or are currently experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or loss of sense of smell; (2) Persons who have had close contact in the last 14 days with any person who has been diagnosed within the last month with COVID-19; and (3) Persons who have been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital, or health agency.

If a person is denied entry to the court for any of these reasons, they may contact their attorney, or contact the court clerk for more information.
8. This order supersedes and replaces AO-2021-07.

SO ORDERED: September 30, 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Meredith D. Drent
Chief Justice