

FILED

Marilyn Burgess
District Clerk

APR 01 2022

Time: 5:20 p.m.
Harris County, Texas
By: Renell Harkles
Deputy **Renell Harkles**

IN THE STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTY OF HARRIS §

ORDER OF THE HARRIS COUNTY LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT JUDGE
EXTENDING THE ORDER ON ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The Emergency Orders of the Texas Supreme Court confirm the judiciary's authority to take reasonable actions to avoid exposing court proceedings and participants to the threat of COVID-19. The Supreme Court's Orders acknowledge the judiciary's broad inherent authority to control orderly proceedings in courtrooms, as confirmed by the Texas Attorney General Opinion KP-0322. Court proceedings, including jury service and in-person attendance at hearings and other court settings, involve groups of people in reasonably close contact.

It is therefore ORDERED that all individuals in the courthouse shall comply with the COVID 19 Operating Plan.

In order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, it is ORDERED that all individuals while in a **Courtroom or the Jury Assembly** for a hearing, trial, or other court proceeding *must* wear a mask covering both nose and mouth unless exempted by the Court. Only the Local Administrative District Judge or Chair of the Jury Committee for the Board of District Judges may provide an exemption from wearing masks in the Jury Assembly.

It is also ORDERED that all individuals with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 *must* wear a mask covering both nose and mouth while in any of the locations affected by this Order.

All other individuals while in the **Courthouse** are *strongly encouraged* to wear a mask that covers both the nose and mouth. In particular, all immunocompromised individuals, those at high risk for severe disease, or those who have a household member or social contact who is immunocompromised or high risk for severe disease are strongly encouraged to wear a mask while in the courthouse.

The locations affected by this Order are:

- The Harris County Civil Courthouse, 201 Caroline Street, Houston, Texas;
- The Harris County Criminal Justice Center, 1201 Franklin Street, Houston, Texas;
- The Harris County Juvenile Justice Center, 1200 Congress Street, Houston, Texas;
- The Harris County Family Law Center, 1115 Congress Street, Houston, Texas; and
- Any auxiliary courthouse; and
- The Jury Assembly.

No masks are required if Harris County Public Threat Level is at Green.

An individual who refuses to comply with this Order may be prohibited from entering or asked to leave the courtroom, an auxiliary courtroom, or jury assembly.

This Order is effective on April 1, 2022 and remains in effect until June 1, 2022. This Order may be extended, modified, or rescinded.

Signed: April 1, 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Latosha Lewis Payne', written over a horizontal line.

The Honorable Latosha Lewis Payne
Harris County Local Administrative District Judge
