

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF DOUGLAS COUNTY, KANSAS

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 21-16a

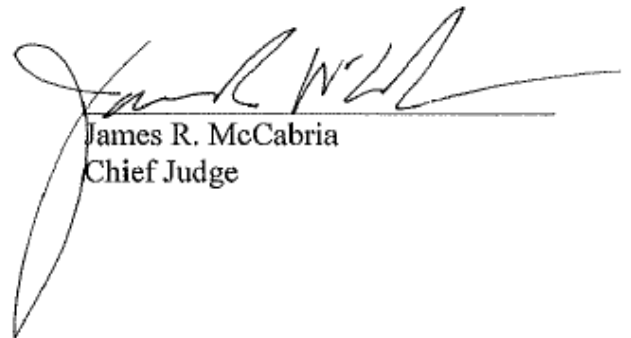
Public and Media Access

Administrative Order 20-13 addresses who may enter the courtrooms and/or adjacent hallways as it relates to parties, their attorneys/assistants and witnesses. Administrative Order 20-16 addresses permission to enter courtrooms and/or adjacent hallways for members of the public and the media. Administrative Order 20-13 is hereby set aside. AO 20-16 is hereby replaced by the terms of this Order. This Order replaces and supercedes AO 21-16 by addressing and permitting the admission of non-litigants into courtrooms as permitted hereunder:

- 1) This Court recognizes that the Public and Press have a qualified First Amendment right of access to court proceedings. The Court also takes seriously its responsibility to administer the law with due regard for the balance of the rights of litigants, the public and the Court's responsibility to protect the integrity and safety of the proceedings.
- 2) Considering current public health risks due to COVID-19, ongoing vaccination schedules and with the continuing goal of tailoring restrictions in the most narrow way to protect the balance of such interests, members of the media and public shall be permitted access to the courtrooms and adjacent hallways for the purpose of attending any public hearing, civil or criminal, in accordance with the terms of this Administrative Order.
- 3) All persons seeking entry to courtrooms or adjacent hallways shall:
 - a. be subject to such health/safety screening as may be implemented by the Sheriff;
 - b. Conform to all masking, social distance or other safety measures as may be required by the district court, or Supreme Court order;

- c. When the courtroom where any hearing occurs reaches a capacity where social distancing cannot be maintained, further entry into the hearing by the public will not be permitted.
- d. The Sheriff's Office Court Security personnel are authorized to monitor social distancing in any courtroom, adjacent hallways and/or any other common areas and may limit entry based on whether appropriate space exists to permit any required social distancing. If any person is denied entry based on social distancing decisions by Court Security, any district judge may be notified to resolve that objection in such manner as to that judge seems appropriate;
- e. Any person permitted to enter under this order may not do so sooner than one hour prior to the time the matter for which their case is scheduled and may not remain for more than 15 minutes after their hearing is concluded, or the testimony for which they were subpoenaed to appear has been completed.

This order is made and is effective this 11th day of May, 2021.



James R. McCabria
Chief Judge