

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF DOUGLAS COUNTY KANSAS

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 21-20**  
**Amending Minimum Standard Health Protocols**  
**And the Impact on Jury Trials**

WHEREAS, this District Court has operated under several local Administrative Orders and transition plans since March 2020 to address the COVID-19 pandemic. During this same time, the Kansas Supreme Court has also issued Administrative Orders directing operations for the district courts of this State.


On May 24, 2021, the Kansas Supreme Court issued Administrative Order 2021-PR-048 (“21-PR-48”) requiring all district and appellate courts in Kansas to develop and follow their own minimum standard health protocols to avoid exposing court users, staff and judicial officers to COVID-19. That order directs each district court to implement COVID-19 screening and communication protocols which continue to utilize appropriate precautionary measures.

On June 2, 2021, this District adopted protocols (Administrative Order 21-17) that include physical distancing of six-feet within all courtrooms. Since that time, after ongoing consultation with the local health department, the Court has determined that COVID-19 concerns can be effectively addressed by requiring *either* face coverings or physical distancing of six feet, but that both are not required. In all other respects, Administrative Order 21-17 remains in effect at this time.

**Impact on Jury Trials.** The requirement of face coverings and physical distancing of six-feet prevented the safe conduct of 12 person jury trials at the Judicial Center. With the removal of that condition, each judge has the discretion to determine whether to conduct all or any portion of any jury trial in their courtroom or the temporary alternate location at the fairgrounds as determined by the needs of any particular case.

The Court will continue to consult with the local health department regarding these protocols and amend as circumstances may warrant.

This order is made and is effective this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of July, 2021.



James R. McCabria  
Chief Judge