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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

IN RE: INDOOR MASK REQUIREMENT  
DUE TO COVID-19

GENERAL ORDER 12-22

This General Order amends General 07-22 with regard to face masks. In recent months, the average daily number of individuals testing positive for COVID-19 has rapidly decreased in the Western District of Washington. COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths have fallen significantly. On September 8, 2022, Washington Governor Jay Inslee announced the rescission of all remaining COVID-19 emergency proclamations and state of emergency, effective October 31, 2022. Given all of the above, the Court ORDERS that the procedures of General Order 07-22 are modified as follows:

- 1           • Requiring the use of face masks inside individual courtrooms is subject to the  
2           discretion of the presiding judge.
- 3           • Face masks will no longer be required for any person entering the courthouse or  
4           while in public spaces of the courthouse. However, all individuals are free to  
5           wear masks based on personal preference, informed by a personal risk  
6           assessment. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with  
7           COVID-19 should wear a mask. Any witness choosing to wear a mask while  
8           testifying on the stand may be required to remove their mask at the discretion of  
9           the presiding judge. Any other person choosing to wear a mask and speaking in  
10          the courtroom may be asked by the judge to temporarily remove their mask if  
11          their words cannot be understood by the court reporter.
- 12          • All trials may proceed in-person unless otherwise indicated at the discretion of the  
13          presiding judge. Trials currently scheduled to be conducted virtually via  
14          Zoom.gov are not affected by this Order.
- 15          • All other courtroom use for civil or criminal matters may proceed at the discretion  
16          of the presiding judge.
- 17          • The procedures authorized under the CARES Act as set forth in General Order  
18          10-22 are unaffected by this order.

19           The Court sincerely hopes that this downward trend in COVID-19 cases and  
20           hospitalizations will continue. However, the last several years have taught us to be adaptable to  
21           changing circumstances. The Court may reinstate COVID-19 safety measures, including the  
22           requirement of face masks or the temporary suspension of in-court proceedings if federal or local  
23           public health guidance indicates that such is necessary to protect the public.

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IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated this 3rd day of November, 2022.



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David G. Estudillo  
Chief United States District Judge