

## COURT MASKING AND SOCIAL DISTANCING POLICY

**POLICY:** Court Masking and Social Distancing Policy

**SCOPE:** This policy shall apply to all persons entering Skamania County Superior Courtrooms and other areas under authority and control of the Superior Court Judges.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Skamania County Superior Court takes the health of all court personnel, users and community members very seriously. Skamania County Superior Court will attempt to follow all appropriate recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), local health officials and County Risk Management to provide all court participants and community members the safest court facilities possible. To that end, (1) all members of the public, including parties, and court personnel shall wear a protective mask while they are within the gallery/seating area and social distance (stay seated 6 feet or more from other persons not within their immediate family); and (2) parties and court personnel shall social distance while in front of the bar, and wear a protective mask while within the area in front of the bar, if they are unable to socially distance.

**PROCEDURE:**

- A. Skamania County Superior Court will implement an emergency order requiring persons attending court proceedings to wear a mask and social distance while in the gallery/seating area and requiring persons attending court proceedings to social distance while in front of the bar and wear a mask while in front of the bar if they are unable to social distance, unless impossible.
- B. When persons attending court proceedings enter the courtroom, they will be instructed to put on their mask. If they don't have a mask, staff will provide them with a disposable mask.
- C. Persons attending court proceedings will be instructed to sit in the areas marked with a blue "X" on the benches in the gallery seating area in order to comply with social distancing rules recommended by the CDC and our local health official. Persons attending court proceedings may be requested to remain in an area outside of the courtroom until their hearing commences to help ensure adequate social distancing in the courtroom.
- D. If a person wanting to attend court proceedings refuses to wear a mask while in the areas requiring a mask to be worn, the following procedure should be followed:
  - The judge presiding over the docket/hearing should be advised,
  - The person will be instructed to wait in the hallway (and while in the hallway to continue to social distance) or in their car (if they wait in their car they need to provide a cell phone number to contact them at the end of the docket/hearing). Persons refusing to wear a mask shall have their matters heard at the end of the docket/hearing when all other litigants have left the courtroom.
- E. If a person advises that they are unable to wear a mask due to medical reasons, staff shall treat this similar to an ADA accommodation. Staff will provide the person with a face shield that does not obstruct their breathing. If the person refuses to wear a face shield, staff shall follow the steps provided in section D.

This policy shall be in effect until further notice and at such time as it is rescinded.