

## **MODIFIED FOURTH NC OAH RESPONSE TO COVID-19 (UPDATED) – MAY 25, 2021**

On February 15, 2021, the North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) posted its Fourth NC OAH Response to COVID-19 (Updated), detailing operations protocols for the OAH Headquarters Building that were placed into effect beginning May 22, 2020, as amended June 23, 2020, in an ongoing effort to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission to employees and those entering and conducting business in the OAH Headquarters Building and to promote a safe and healthy work environment. These protocols are subject to further modifications and/or restrictions as further guidance and directives are received.

On May 13, 2021, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People that advised that currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at protecting vaccinated people against symptomatic and severe COVID-19, that fully vaccinated people are less likely to transmit COVID-19 to others, and recommended that “indoor and outdoor activities pose minimal risk to fully vaccinated people” and that in most settings, “fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing face coverings.”

On May 14, 2021, the Governor of the State of North Carolina, in Executive Order No. 215, fully lifted the indoor face covering requirement on most businesses and operations in North Carolina.

On May 14, 2021, the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court eliminated Emergency Directive 21 that pertains to face coverings in court facilities, and instead leaves that decision to the informed discretion of local court officials.

Consistent with the directives of the Governor and the Chief Justice, the Director of OAH herewith issues this Modified Fourth NC OAH Response to COVID-19 (Updated), amending the requirements for face coverings in the OAH Headquarters Building:

### **2. Prevention of COVID-19 Transmission**

#### **Amended Face Covering Requirements:**

- Consistent with CDC Guidance and directives of the Governor and Chief Justice, fully vaccinated people will not be required to wear face coverings when inside the OAH Headquarters Building. However, OAH employees who are fully vaccinated are welcome to continue wearing face coverings while working indoors.
- Individuals who have **not** been fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings while in the OAH Headquarters Building and to continue to adhere to safety precautions to avoid infection.
- Face coverings may be required of all persons, including fully vaccinated persons, in OAH Courtrooms if ordered by the presiding Administrative Law Judge, or in other areas of the OAH Headquarters Building if required by the Director of OAH.

This amendment pertains to face coverings in the OAH Headquarters Building only and supersedes the face covering requirements contained in the Fourth NC OAH Response to COVID-19 (Updated) – February 15, 2021. Except for this amendment, the provisions and requirements of the Fourth OAH Response to COVID-19 (Updated) – February 15, 2021 remain in effect.

This posting is effective, May 25, 2021, and is reflective of the crisis circumstances as they currently exist. This posting is likely to be updated and modified as OAH receives further directives from North Carolina's Governor and Chief Justice.

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