

**SUPREME COURT OF TASMANIA**  
**CIRCULAR TO PRACTITIONERS**

No. 11 of 2022

7 September 2022

**COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS IN THE SUPREME COURT**

The judges of the Supreme Court of Tasmania have decided to reduce the precautions taken by the Court in relation to the spread of COVID-19. This circular gives details of the revised arrangements. It is published at the direction of the Chief Justice, the Hon Alan Blow AO. It supersedes Circulars 22 of 2021, 3 of 2022, and 5 of 2022. It applies to people attending the Supreme Court in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

The Supreme Court will continue to take various precautions against the spread of COVID-19. The judges are very conscious that there are many people who have no choice about attending court, including litigants, accused persons, witnesses, jurors and legal practitioners.

Each judge will determine the appropriate precautions for cases coming before him or her, depending on the circumstances of each case.

**Vaccinations**

From now on people attending the Supreme Court will not be asked to reveal their vaccination status or to provide proof of their vaccinations.

**Screening and temperature testing**

As a general rule, no-one entering a Supreme Court building will be asked any screening questions or required to undergo a temperature check.

However anyone with flu-like symptoms should not enter a Supreme Court building, and may be refused entry.

**Face masks**

Unless exempted by the presiding judge, every person in a courtroom must have a face mask and wear it. Counsel and witnesses may remove their masks when they are speaking. During jury trials, accused persons will ordinarily be required to remove their masks so that juries can observe them during their trials.

Court staff will continue to ensure that every person in a courtroom wears a mask of appropriate quality, and wears it properly, covering the nose and mouth. This applies to court staff, counsel, instructing solicitors, clerks, witnesses, journalists, members of the public, and everyone else.

If a person arrives without a mask, the court will provide one. If a person arrives with a mask that is considered inadequate or inappropriate, the Court will provide a better one and require the person to wear it.

If a person summoned for jury service provides evidence of a medical exemption from wearing a mask, he or she may ask to be excused for the whole of the current sittings.

### **Social distancing**

As far as practicable, arrangements for people to be separated by at least 1.5 metres will be continued. However, in order to deal with a backlog of criminal jury trials, the Court will use some jury rooms in Hobart and Launceston where separations of 1.5 metres will not be possible.

### **Participation by video-link and telephone**

Each judge will determine on a case by case basis whether legal practitioners, witnesses and others may participate in proceedings by audio-visual link or by telephone.

The Chief Justice's determination under s 20(2)(b) of the *Covid-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 2020*, which was dated 12 May 2022, is no longer in force as a result of the State of Emergency having ended.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J A Connolly', is positioned above the typed name.

J A Connolly  
Registrar