

SUPREME COURT OF TASMANIA

CIRCULAR TO PRACTITIONERS

No 15 of 2022

13 October 2022

REDUCED 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 by making the wearing of face masks optional rather than compulsory. This circular gives details of the Court's current COVID-19 precautions. It supersedes Circular No 11 of 2022. It applies to people attending the Supreme Court in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. It is published at the discretion of the Chief Justice, the Hon Alan Blow AO.

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. The arrangements below will apply unless a judge gives a direction to the contrary.

Face masks

The wearing of face masks in Supreme Court buildings is now optional, and no longer compulsory. No person needs to wear a face mask unless a judge gives a direction requiring a face mask to be worn.

Court staff will have a supply of face masks, and will make masks available on request.

Vaccinations

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 must not enter a Supreme Court building, and may be refused entry or required to leave.

Arrangements for jurors

Jurors with respiratory conditions that make them vulnerable to infections may ask to be excused from jury service.

If a juror tests positive for COVID-19, he or she must not come to the Court for at least 7 days, but must notify the Court staff that he or she has tested positive.

If a juror develops flu-like symptoms, he or she should inform that Court staff and arrange to take a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).

As far as practicable, arrangements for jurors to sit at least 1.5 metres away from each other 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.



Brendan McManus
Deputy Registrar