

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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SECOND AMENDED GENERAL ORDER NO. 20-05

Trials and Evidentiary Hearings During COVID-19 Public Emergency

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A state of emergency has been declared in response to the spread of COVID-19, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have urged reduced contact among people to slow the spread of the disease. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois finds that the COVID-19 emergency constitutes good cause in compelling circumstances for taking testimony by contemporaneous transmission other than in open court, *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 43(a) (made applicable by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9017), and so issues this order to protect public health.

**Trials and Evidentiary Hearings by Video**

1. All trials and evidentiary hearings will be held by video using the Zoom for Government platform, and no trials and evidentiary hearings will be held in the courthouse, unless the assigned judge orders otherwise.
2. The court has posted on its web site a Model Pretrial Order for use in video trials and evidentiary hearings. Judges may modify the Model Pretrial Order to suit their preferences and the specific needs of the trial or hearing.
3. The court finds that Zoom for Government and the Model Pretrial Order together provide appropriate safeguards for taking testimony by contemporaneous transmission other than in open court. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 43(a).

## **Trials and Evidentiary Hearings in the Courthouse**

4. If the assigned judge orders that a trial or evidentiary hearing will be held in the courthouse, the trial must be conducted under these protocols:

a. **Masking.** In accordance with Chief Judge Pallmeyer's Third Amended Order dated July 30, 2021, all persons in the courtroom, other than witnesses while testifying, must wear a face mask.

b. **Social Distancing.** All persons in the courtroom, including court staff, must be spaced so that each participant is always at least six feet away from any other participant. No more than two participants may sit at counsel table, and they must sit so that they are at least six feet apart.

5. Nothing in this order prevents from the assigned judge from imposing additional protocols to protect the health and safety of trial participants.


### **Effective Date**

6. This order supersedes Amended General Order No. 20-05, dated November 12, 2021, and is effective immediately.

7. This order is predicated on the district court's requirements for proceedings in the Dirksen Courthouse during the public health emergency. If the district court revises those requirements, the assigned judge may hold a trial or evidentiary hearing using protocols consistent with the district court's revised requirements.

Dated: March 15, 2022

ENTERED FOR THE COURT:

  
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A. Benjamin Goldgar  
Chief Judge