

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
219 SOUTH DEARBORN STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604

CHAMBERS OF
REBECCA R. PALLMEYER
CHIEF JUDGE

312-435-5600

October 18, 2020

Dear Dirksen Courthouse Occupants:

I write today with word of yet another positive COVID-19 test result—that of a Court Security Officer (CSO) who was in the Dirksen Courthouse as recently as yesterday. This test result will require notice to a number of visitors to the Courthouse. We have learned, based on a brief investigation, that the CSO was assigned to the lobby screening station on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 through and including Friday, October 16, 2020. The Officer also worked in several basement locations and on the 19th floor of the Courthouse on Saturday, October 17, 2020. The CSO was wearing a face covering the entire time that he/she was in the building, and while assigned to the lobby screening station is required to wear latex gloves. We notified the General Services Administration last night, and GSA took immediate action to ensure that the areas visited by the CSO are being cleaned as required by our protocols, a process that began early this morning.

This recent test, and news reports of rising numbers of COVID-19 diagnoses in our District, heightens my concern for our safety and my determination to take all reasonable measures to protect the health of those who work in and use our Courthouses. Our Clerk of Court, Tom Bruton, and I are closely monitoring the statistics, our employees' health issues, and the number of recent incidents involving individuals in our buildings who have tested positive. It is my responsibility to keep every person in the Courthouses safe and if I conclude additional restrictions are necessary, I will impose them in order to limit the amount of staff and visitors to the building.

I remain of the view that this individual positive test, like the ones I have described in earlier letters, is not a basis for alarm. It is, however, an important reminder of the need for continued vigilant enforcement of our rules. Because COVID-19 spreads easily between people (not so easily from contact with surfaces), we must always use a **face mask** that covers our nose and mouth, maintain physical **distance** from one another, and **wash hands** frequently and thoroughly—not only when you are in the Courthouse, but also in your social interactions. Please continue to monitor yourselves for symptoms associated with COVID-19. As always, you should contact your healthcare provider with any questions about symptoms or specific questions about your health.

Thank you for your commitment to the work of this court and for your assistance in maintaining a safe workplace.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rebecca R. Pallmeyer" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rebecca R. Pallmeyer
Chief Judge
Chair, Dirksen Courthouse Building Security Committee