

**STATE OF MAINE
SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER JB-25-03

RESCISSION OF PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT ORDERS AND POST-PANDEMIC
MANAGEMENT ORDER

Effective: December 15, 2025

Starting in March of 2020, in response to the public health concerns caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), Maine’s Judicial Branch issued a series of Pandemic Management Orders (PMOs) addressing the wearing of masks, the need for social distancing, required health screening at all court facilities, limiting access to those facilities, mandating the use of remote hearing protocols, and limiting or banning certain types of dockets. Those PMOs were amended as circumstances changed and new information was learned.

Given guidance from the Maine and United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in light of the Governor’s Executive Order 39 FY 20/21, the Supreme Judicial Court determined in June 2021 that most of those PMOs were no longer necessary, and they were rescinded in Post-Pandemic Management Order PPMO-SJC-1. Because many of the practices, processes, and procedures implemented as a result of those PMOs had proven to be effective and efficient, the Court determined to continue some of those practices, processes, and procedures post-pandemic, many of which were embodied in PPMO-SJC-1. Over time, various provisions of PPMO-SJC-1 were rescinded.

When the requirement for social distancing was removed, the Court determined that there was no longer a need to impose strict limits on the number of persons summonsed for arraignments and first appearances. Therefore, the last paragraphs of PPMO-SJC-1(E) (issued June 1, 2021) were deleted effective June 28, 2021.

Maine’s State of Civil Emergency and the mandated use of face coverings indoors ended on June 30, 2021. The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention continued to recommend that unvaccinated people—including those under age 12 who are not yet eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine—wear face

coverings indoors. Because of these changes, the Court determined that there was no longer a need to require all members of the public to wear face coverings in court facilities, but there was still a need for some precautions. Therefore, PPMO-SJC-1(A) (issued June 1, 2021) was amended, and PPMO-SJC-1(B) (issued June 1, 2021) was deleted and replaced effective July 1, 2021.

Due to an increase in the number of infections statewide, the Court, in the revision of August 16, 2021, reinstated the face covering requirements that were in place under PPMO-SJC-1(A) and (B) (issued June 1, 2021).

Based on the science regarding the effectiveness of wearing different types of masks, effective January 17, 2022, the Court required members of the public to wear an N-95 mask, a KN-95 mask, or a 3-ply surgical mask when masks were required in court facilities. Three-ply surgical masks were provided to members of the public at entry screening to ensure compliance.

Given guidance from the Maine and United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the requirement of masks was lifted effective March 14, 2022, and we rescinded PPMO-SJC-1(A) and (B), which previously governed the wearing of face coverings in court facilities and courtrooms, with the exception that some individual small rooms may be specifically posted to require the wearing of masks in those rooms. Health status requirements were updated.

On March 30, 2023, we rescinded (1) PPMO-SJC-1(C) (imposing health status requirements for entry into a courthouse), issuing an Administrative Order in its place without changing the requirements at that time; (2) PPMO-SJC-1(E), which previously allowed a court full discretion in determining whether a proceeding would be remote, because some limitations were by then imposed by administrative order; and PPMO-SJC-1(H) because it was unnecessary given that committees/boards/etc. were not *required* to meet in person and could exercise their discretion.

Today, we rescind the remaining provisions of PPMO-SJC-1 because all pertinent provisions have been incorporated into court rules or administrative orders, including Criminal Rule Clarification, Me. Admin. Order JB-25-02, issued simultaneously with this order.

Because the rescission of PMOs was achieved through the now-rescinded PPMO-SJC-1, we incorporate its rescission provisions here, in addition to our order that PPMO-SJC-1 itself be rescinded.

The following PMOs and PPMOs are no longer in effect because they either have been or are now rescinded, or are moot:

- PMO-SJC-1 (compendium of multiple provisions)
- PMO-SJC-2(B) through (E) (governing electronic filing of certain motions directly bearing on a defendant's liberty interests, termination dates for extended deadlines, and face-to-face or in-person contacts with children and families)
- PMO-SJC-3A(governing the submission of documents by email in protection from abuse and protection from harassment cases), the provisions of which have been incorporated into PMO-SJC-3
- PMO-SJSC-4 (Maine Bar Examination)¹
- PMO-SJC-5 (quarantine procedures)
- PMO-SJC-6 (prescribing emergency rules for forcible entry and detainer (eviction) cases)
- PMO-SJC-7 (remote proceedings and public access)
- PMO-SJC-9 (screening questions upon entry to a court facility)
- PMO-SJC-10 (procedures for hearing child protection cases)
- PMO-SJC-11(extending continuing legal education deadlines)
- PMO-SJC-12 (creating a pilot project for stand-alone small claims mediation)
- PPMO-SJC-1 (administrative order and notice from the Maine Supreme Judicial Court)

The following PMOs and PPMOs remain in effect:

- PMO-SJC-2(A) (administration of oaths at depositions via remote audio-video communication equipment), (F) (oral depositions in civil cases), and (G) (electronic signatures)
- PMO-SJC-3 (submission of documents by email)

¹ Although PMO-SJC-4 was not rescinded, it is now moot. The bar examinations affected by the PMO as it was amended in 2020 and 2021 have already been administered, and the PMO is not in effect for other examinations.

- PMO-SJC-8 (waiver of initial appearances and arraignments)
- PPMO-SJC-2 (trial court remote proceedings)

The PMOs and PPMOs that remain in effect are available at <https://www.courts.maine.gov/covid19/index.html>

For the Court:

_____/s/_____
Valerie Stanfill
Chief Justice, Supreme Judicial Court

Promulgation Date: December 4, 2025