

**BYRON MUNICIPAL COURT
COURT PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

IF YOU PAY YOUR CITATION PRIOR TO YOUR COURT DATE FOR ANY CHARGE OTHER THAN DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE WHICH IS A MANDATORY APPEARANCE CHARGE, YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO APPEAR. IF YOU PAY THE CITATION AND DO NOT APPEAR, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DETERMINE THE CONSEQUENCES OF HAVING A BOND FORFEITURE ENTERED ON YOUR CRIMINAL HISTORY IF YOU WERE ARRESTED OR DRIVING HISTORY FOR A REPORTABLE OFFENSE.

You may pay your citation online at byronpay.com which is the preferred method, but if necessary one of the clerks may take a card payment via telephone at 478-956-2727. If you find it necessary to pay in person, there is a payment window at the entrance to the Court located on the second floor of the Byron Municipal Building.

If you wish to dispute the violation(s), it is your right to appear in Court.

For individuals who do not have an attorney and who have received a citation for or have been arrested for Driving Under the Influence, Driving While License Suspended, Possession of Marijuana, No Insurance, Suspended Registration, or Shoplifting and would like information about resolving your case, contact the Solicitor for the City of Byron, Donna J. Culpepper at 478-956-2757 or email djculpepper@byronga.com.

In response to the threat posed by the COVID-19 virus and in accordance with the Orders of the Governor and Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, Byron Municipal Court has implemented changes to court hearing procedures. Please be advised of the following:

*Anyone coming to the Municipal Building for a Court proceeding will enter through the main doors of the building and will be subject to screening by a member of the Police Department, Court Personnel, or their designee. Screening may include but not necessarily be limited to questions as to whether the individual is experiencing symptoms such as fever, shortness of breath, cough, or other respiratory symptoms and questions related to travel or potential exposure to COVID 19 within the last fourteen days. As the availability of equipment permits, the individual's temperature may be taken with a no touch thermometer. Should concerns be raised as a result of the screening, the Judge presiding over the court proceeding will be notified and a decision will be made as how to proceed.

*Social Distancing will be required for all court proceedings. To accomplish this, it is requested that only the Defendant listed on the citation, the attorney, and any witnesses for trial enter the building unless the Defendant is under the age of 21 in which case he/she may be accompanied by one parent/guardian.

*If the Courtroom reaches a capacity in which social distancing of at least six feet between individuals is not possible, Defendants may provide their cell phone number and wait outside or in their car to be

called or if preferred seating with at least six foot space between others will be provided in the auditorium on the first floor of the building.

*Individuals appearing for Court are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering (mask or cloth) the entire time while in the Municipal Building for their own safety and safety of others.

*Hand sanitizer will be available and anyone appearing for Court will be requested to use the same. The Courtroom and any areas shared by individuals will be sanitized prior to and after each Court session.

*Individuals who are 65 or older or are immune compromised and are not comfortable coming to court due to increased risk may contact the clerk's office at 478-956-2757 prior to the hearing date to be provided an extension.

***PLEASE DO NOT COME TO COURT IF YOU ARE ILL. Anyone who has tested positive for Covid 19 or has had symptoms within fourteen days of the court date, should contact the Clerk's Office at 478-956-2757 to discuss an extension. If the case has been continued previously at your request, the Clerk may require documentation of illness to continue the case.**

If a Defendant or Attorney requests to conduct a hearing using technology to provide an alternate to in person proceedings, a request should be made to the presiding Judge. No proceeding shall be conducted that would violate the constitutional rights of the Defendant.

To comply with the Order of the Chief Justice of the Ga. Supreme Court, all individuals present for Court and Court Personnel must observe at least six feet of social distance at all times. Signage is posted to encourage compliance.

These Guidelines will remain in effect at least as long as any Judicial Emergency Order exists. The length and degree of restriction may also depend on what is deemed necessary in the Municipal Court of Byron and allowed by statute. It is not the intention of the Judge or Court Personnel to impose any restriction for any period of time beyond what is absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of all who enter the building.