

IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT FOR THE CITY OF LAGRANGE

STATE OF GEORGIA

SAFETY GUIDELINES ORDER in re: COVID-19

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61 a State of Judicial Emergency was declared by Harold D. Melton, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia on March 14, 2020, extended April 6, 2020, May 13, 2020 and June 12, 2020.

The LaGrange Municipal Court is back open and is using limited in-person courtroom contact, social distancing in the courtroom and throughout the court facility and offering the use of video conferencing technologies to parties in an effort to manage cases remotely, if said video conferencing is desired and consented to by all parties.

All guidelines and best practices provided for by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health and our local health department shall be followed.

More specifically, all persons entering the building will be screened at the entrance by court personnel in a manner consistent with the recommendations of Federal, State and local health agencies, including asking the following pertinent health-related questions:

1. Have you traveled to or from any areas in which COVID-19 is particularly active?
2. Have you in the last ten (10) days experienced symptoms of COVID-19, including: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever above 100.00 degrees, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, or a new loss of taste or smell?
3. Have you been in contact with someone known to have COVID-19 within the last 14 days?

4. Have you tested positive for COVID-19 yourself in the last thirty (30) days?
5. Are you currently in the COVID-19 testing protocol and therefore should be in quarantine?

Anyone with a cough or fever or otherwise experiencing symptoms of sickness or anyone who has been around someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 has an affirmative duty to disclose the information at the time of their screening. Parties may be denied entry to the building based on their responses to the questions. Additionally, all parties seeking entrance to the court facility will have their temperature taken by court personnel. Anyone with a fever over 100.0 will not be allowed to enter and, if applicable, their case will be continued.

Therefore, if you are feeling unwell, are over the age of 65, have a pre-existing health condition, are immune-compromised, medically fragile, live with someone whom is immune-compromised or is medically fragile, have small children and do not have access to child care, or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, immediately contact the Court at 706-883-2026 to ask to be excused, or if applicable, to have your case rescheduled. Please be sure you leave a return phone number and your name as it appears in court records if you do not reach someone. In some cases, documentation may be required.

Upon arrival to the court facility and while waiting entrance thereto, all parties shall refrain from congregating by maintaining the minimum required social distance of no less than six (6) feet. All parties may wait on the sidewalk outside of the court facility while adhering to the provided social distancing markings.

All parties whom are seeking entrance into the court facility will be required to wear a protective face mask upon entering the facility. Upon arrival to the court facility if you do not have a mask, one will be provided to you. Masks shall cover the mouth

and nose, not the eyes or other parts of the head, and shall be worn by all persons, no exceptions.

Hand sanitizer shall be available at the entrance of the court facility and inside the courtroom. All parties are required to use the provided hand sanitizer upon entering the court facility and are further encouraged frequent and liberal use of the additionally provided hand sanitizer which is found situated throughout the court facility and the courtroom.

All parties shall strictly maintain social distancing of no less than six (6) feet while inside the court facility. Attorneys, court staff and any other parties shall arrange their interactions in areas of the court facility, or outside of the court facility, so to ensure that the minimum required distance is kept.

Upon entering into the courtroom, court staff will direct all parties to the marked social distancing seating areas. All parties shall adhere to the marked seating areas and shall further adhere to the marked directions for the flow of foot traffic throughout the court facility.

Given the limited amount of space throughout the court facility, all parties are encouraged to bring only the essential persons for their case to the court facility.

Any person who willfully fails to abide by this Order may be held in contempt of court.

SO ORDERED, this the 15th day of June, 2020.



Hon. James G. Baker
Judge, LaGrange Municipal Court