

BANKS COUNTY MAGISTRATE COURT
GUIDELINES FOR IN-COURT PROCEEDINGS

The following guidelines pertain to in-court proceedings held in the Banks County Magistrate Court.

- 1) The Court will follow the ***“public health guidance”*** provided by the federal Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) and the local health department regarding the guidelines for in-court proceedings.
- 2) Upon sending notice of the date and time of an in-court proceeding to the parties thereof, the Court will request that each party notify the Court as to how many witnesses or other persons will be attending the proceeding.
- 3) When arriving at the courthouse for an in-court proceeding all persons will be screened as outlined in the ***“Guidelines for Screening Visitors at the Entrance to a Courthouse”***, which has been provided to Courts by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) with input from experts at the Georgia Department of Public Health ***(copy attached)***. ***Screening will take place outside the courthouse in designated location(s)***.
- 4) All parties allowed in courthouse after screening will be asked to follow verbal instructions as well as the signage posted in various locations which will designate routes to courtrooms as well as entry and exit points. Also, seating locations will be marked on the benches in the courtrooms for social distancing purposes.
- 5) Should a party or witness to a proceeding not meet the screening requirements for entry into the courthouse they will be provided the number to the Court and asked to contact Court for instructions.
- 6) Cases will be staggered to allow for sanitizing, between proceedings, with antibacterial spray and/or wipes.
- 7) The wearing of masks and gloves is encouraged.

Thank you,



Ivan Mote
Chief Magistrate, Banks County

Guidelines for Screening Visitors at the Entrance to a Courthouse

The following suggestions come from public health experts at the Georgia Department of Public Health. Courts may use these guidelines at their discretion. Keep in mind that screening is an action taken after the following actions have already been implemented: (1) eliminate all non-critical functions, (2) impose social distancing among employees and visitors, and (3) urge anyone not feeling well to self-isolate at home.

- Conduct the screening outside or in a designated area;
- Ask whether the visitor is experiencing fever, any shortness of breath, persistent cough or sore throat, or any other symptoms of respiratory infection, or has experienced such symptoms and is currently subject to Georgia Department of Public Health's Isolation Protocol (or post a notice listing those symptoms in a prominent location);
- Ask whether the visitor has traveled to an area or location with widespread, ongoing transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19) within the last 14 days, per CDC guidelines, or has been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 14 days;
- Take each person's temperature using a no-touch thermometer;
 - The persons taking visitors' temperatures should wear gloves, a surgical mask, and a plastic face shield;
- Prohibit entrance by anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher;
 - Note that, as the weather grows increasingly warm, screening will produce increased false results unless individuals are allowed to cool down first;

- Prohibit any person meeting either the respiratory infection symptoms, travel or exposure criteria, or the temperature criteria from entering the building;
- Provide hand sanitizer and/or face masks for those entering the building.

Persons prohibited from entering the building should be given a telephone number or other means to contact court officials regarding alternative means of pursuing critical judicial matters.

March 27, 2020