

Gwinnett Judicial Circuit

Guidelines for In-Court Judicial Proceedings

Pursuant to the Chief Justice's May 11, 2020 *Second Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency*, the following guidelines for in-court proceedings are hereby established.

Safety is a major concern for anyone entering the courthouse. Anyone exhibiting symptoms of infection such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 are asked not to enter the building.

If you are sick and have concerns about appearing in person, please notify your attorney or call or email the judge's office handling the case for which you have been summoned. Contact information for courts and other county offices can be found at www.gwinnettcourts.com.

MAXIMIZING THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Courts are working to limit or eliminate the need for close personal contact during judicial proceeding. The Courts are now utilizing video conferencing and other electronic meeting alternatives to the extent they are available and otherwise permitted by law.

HEALTHY PRACTICES ARE ENCOURAGED

We are requesting all visitors to the Courthouse to *frequently wash or clean their hands*. Public restrooms are available in the building with appropriate supplies. *Hand sanitizer stations* are located throughout the building and their use by all is encouraged. When possible, refrain from touching your face or mouth. *Please cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough*. Signage is placed throughout the building encouraging and reminding people to follow healthy practices recommended by the CDC.

Everyone is encouraged to use face masks while in the building.

SOCIAL DISTANCING TO BE MAINTAINED IN THE BUILDING

We are requesting all visitors to the building to maintain appropriate *social distancing*, including maintaining a *6 foot separation* from others whenever possible. Please do not congregate in groups, particularly in public common areas, galleries of courtrooms, wells of the courtroom, hallways, elevators, restrooms, or other locations.

Seating areas have been marked out to assist in maintaining distance from others. Wayfinding markers and pathways will be marked to encourage distancing.

MINIMIZING EXPOSURE RISK

Court personnel, other employees and visitors to the building are being temperature screened when entering the building. Employees have been instructed to report potential exposure to their supervisors and self-quarantine if necessary. Employees have been instructed not to report to work if experiencing symptoms. Offices have instituted teleworking policies and are staggering work hours in an effort to minimize exposure.

Inmates are at present not being physically brought in to any courtroom.

CLEANING & SANITIZING

Public spaces are being frequently and appropriately cleaned within the building. Sanitizing supplies including wipes, sprays and hand sanitizers have been provided to staff for use in maintaining a clean and sanitary work environment.

Courts are anticipating that courtrooms will be cleaned as needed.

COURT SCHEDULING

Court schedules are being modified to limit the number of persons called in to the building by limiting the numbers of those summoned and staggering calendars. Courts may otherwise modify normal calendar practices by other means including the use of remote hearings. Additional attention will be given to scheduling proceedings in courtrooms with more limited seating capacity.

HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS

All visitors who are members of a vulnerable population (such as persons over age 65, individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised, such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy) **are encouraged to bring that to the attention of the Court prior to any court appearance so that reasonable alternatives to appearing in person can be explored.** Contact information for each Court is found at www.gwinnettcourts.com.

GEORGE F. HUTCHINSON, III
CHIEF JUDGE, SUPERIOR COURT

KRISTINA HAMMER BLUM
CHIEF MAGISTRATE

ROBERT WALLER
PRESIDING JUDGE, JUVENILE COURT

PAMELA D. SOUTH
CHIEF JUDGE, STATE COURT

CHRISTOPHER A. BALLAR
PROBATE COURT JUDGE

MICHAEL GREENE
CHIEF JUDGE, RECORDER'S COURT