

# PROBATE & MUNICIPAL COURTS OF MORGAN COUNTY

Judge Charles W. Merritt, Jr.

## MEMORANDUM

TO: All litigants, attorneys & members of the public  
FROM: Probate & Municipal Court Judge Charles W. Merritt, Jr.  
DATE: June 9, 2020

In accordance with the Governor's RENEWAL OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH STATE OF EMERGENCY, the Morgan County Probate and Municipal Courts will handle matters to the extent feasible and consistent with this Executive Order the United States and Georgia constitutions of applicable statues and court rules, including the public's right of access to judicial proceedings and a criminal defendant's right to confrontation and open courtrooms. These procedures shall remain in effect while the Public Health State of Emergency is in place.

### **GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR MORGAN COUNTY PROBATE AND MUNICIPAL COURTS**

1. To the extent possible all parties, attorneys & witnesses should appear via teleconference or video conference.
2. The courthouse will remain open for the public, but they are encouraged to stay home.
3. Please leave all non-essential people at home. Avoid bringing children or family members, especially the elderly, to court.
4. No one should come to court if they are not feeling well or have a temperature above 100 degrees. Contact the Probate or Municipal Court to be excused and to have your case rescheduled.
5. Before you come to the courthouse please answer the four questions below. If your answer to any of the four questions is YES, then you should not come to the courthouse. Instead, contact the Probate or Municipal Court to be excused and to have your case rescheduled.
  - A. Have you had a recent onset of coughing?
  - B. Have you had any recent difficulty breathing?
  - C. Have you been around anyone who has been outside of the country in the last 14 days?
  - D. Have you been around anyone who has been diagnosed with or is under investigation for potential COVID-19 infection?
6. Prior to entering the courthouse, you will be asked to complete the COVID-19 HEALTH SURVEY.
7. MASK or FACE COVERING HIGHLY SUGGESTED. Everyone coming to the courthouse is asked to have a mask or face covering but is not required. If you are wearing a mask or face covering and you are directed to remove the item by a member of the court staff please do so accordingly.
8. Entering the courthouse. If you are entering the courthouse and there is a line, maintain social distance. Where there are markings on the ground establishing safe spacing, they are to be followed.
9. The social distancing rules are in effect in and around the Morgan County Courthouse. Everyone shall maintain at least six feet distance from anyone else.
10. Hand Sanitizer stations are available in several locations in the courthouse. Everyone is encouraged to use it frequently.
11. COURTROOM. There are limits on the number of people who may safely enter the courtroom to comply with the social distancing requirements.
12. After signing in and completing the COVID-19 HEALTH SURVEY you are encouraged to remain outside the courthouse or in your car until they are called. All witnesses are to sign in and complete the same survey.

**As long as there is PUBLIC HEALTH STATE OF EMERGENCY for GEORGIA these guidelines will remain in effect.**

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Judge, Charles W. Merritt, Jr.