

**IN THE STATE COURT OF DECATUR COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA**

**ORDER ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS IN  
THE STATE COURT OF DECATUR COUNTY, GEORGIA DURING THE STATEWIDE  
JUDICIAL EMERGENCY**

By order filed May 13, 2020, J. Kevin Chason, Chief Judge for the Superior Courts of the South Georgia Judicial Circuit adopted guidelines for the conduct of Judicial Proceedings during the Statewide Judicial Emergency (the "Order"), a copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit "A"**. This Order has already been published by the Clerk of Court. It is hereby ordered that the procedures set forth in the aforesaid Order are hereby adopted and approved for the conduct of Judicial Proceedings in the State Court of Decatur County, Georgia.

It is ordered that the Clerk of this Court shall provide notice of the issuance of this Order to the public in the same manner as set forth in the aforesaid Order.

SO ORDERED, this 12<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2020.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Kendrick', is written over a horizontal line.

David A. Kendrick, Judge, State Court of  
Decatur County, Georgia

Filed with the Court on:

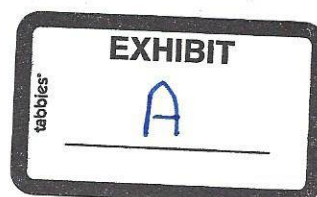
J.K. Chason 5/13/2020 @ 2:15 p.m.  
J. Kevin Chason, Judge

IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS OF THE  
SOUTH GEORGIA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**ORDER ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING  
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS DURING STATEWIDE JUDICIAL  
EMERGENCY**

Due to the continuing Statewide Judicial Emergency declared by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, until further order of the Court, it is Ordered and Adjudged that the following guidelines shall, effectively immediately, be utilized in the Superior Courts of the South Georgia Judicial Circuit comprising the counties of Baker, Calhoun, Decatur, Grady and Mitchell:

1. The public shall have the right of access to all judicial proceedings except as prohibited by law (such as adoption proceedings, for example) and all courtrooms shall remain open to the public.
2. All criminal defendants shall have the continued right to confrontation.
3. The Courts will continue to use technology to conduct remote proceedings where practical and appropriate.
4. Courtroom security staff shall ensure social distancing in courtroom public common areas, galleries of courtrooms, wells of the courtroom, hallways, elevators, restrooms, or other locations where the public might gather. All persons in the courtroom shall practice social distancing, which shall be enforced by courtroom security. The courtroom shall be filled at no more than 33% capacity.
5. All spectators, parties, and witnesses shall be required to wear an appropriate face mask before entering the courtroom. All attorneys, courtroom security, and court personnel are encouraged to wear face masks.





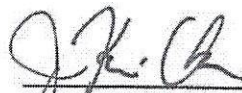
6. Hand sanitizer dispensers should be available at various locations around the courthouse, including at the entry and exits from the courtrooms. Pens should not be shared between court participants.
7. All persons desiring to enter the courtroom shall practice social distancing while waiting to go through metal detectors. Individuals will be allowed to enter only through one door of the courtroom. All individuals will be subject to temperature checks prior to any court proceeding. Individuals feeling feverish or with measured temperatures equal to or great than 100F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 will not be permitted in the courtroom. Inmates from jail facilities who may be transported to a courtroom will also be screened.
8. Sanitizing of the courtroom shall be routinely and regularly performed including both before and after all court proceedings. On hearing days, the courtroom shall be sanitized during the day.
9. Attorneys, parties, and witnesses over age 65 and 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 shall notify the Court and the Court shall consider excusing that person and/or granting a continuance.
10. All witness subpoenas in any case, civil or criminal, need to state that if the witness has been running a fever, experiencing any of the COVID-19 symptoms, anyone in their home has been running a fever, or if they have come into contact with a COVID-19 patient then they must notify the clerk immediately.

11. All non-essential civil hearings may be held as scheduled by the assigned judge. All attorneys and parties in non-essential domestic civil cases shall conduct settlement negotiations prior to their court date. Unless otherwise authorized by the judge, all cases shall promptly commence at the time scheduled and conclude at the time scheduled.

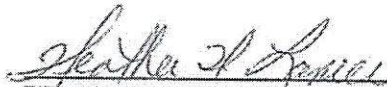
12. All uncontested non-essential civil matters shall be presented to the presiding judge in chambers after any legally required time has passed. Any documents sent to the presiding judge before the legally required time has passed may be returned to the sender unsigned.

IT IS ORDERED that each Clerk of this Court shall provide notice of the issuance of this order to the public. Notice shall be provided by whatever means are reasonably calculated to reach the public and may, without limitation, include publication in the legal organ of the county and any other newspaper of local distribution, posting of written notices at the courthouse, and other public gathering sites, transmittal by facsimile or e-mail, and announcements on television, radio, and public address systems.

SO ORDERED this 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.



J. KEVIN CHASON  
Chief Judge of Superior Courts  
South Georgia Judicial Circuit



HEATHER H. LANIER  
Judge of Superior Courts  
South Georgia Judicial Circuit

Prepared by the Court