

IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF ABBEVILLE

STATE OF GEORGIA

COVID-19 COURT OPERATING GUIDELINES

Due to the ongoing public health state of emergency declared by the Governor and a Statewide Judicial Emergency declared by Chief Justice Melton of the Georgia Supreme Court, the Municipal Court of Abbeville, GA will conduct in-person hearings and court sessions on a limited basis subject to the following guidelines:

1. Each person entering the courthouse or a court facility will be required to go through a screening process which will include taking the person's temperature. Anyone with a temperature over 100 degrees will not be admitted to the courthouse. Each person entering the courthouse will be requested to use hand sanitizer which will be available.
2. Persons falling into one of the following categories shall be denied admittance into any court facility in the Abbeville Municipal Court if they do not obtain an exception from the Judge:
 - a. Anyone entering the court facility who is experiencing a fever, any shortness of breath, persistent cough or sore throat, or any other symptoms of respiratory infection or who has experienced such symptoms and is subject to Georgia Department of Public Health Isolation Protocol will not be admitted to the court facility.
 - b. Any person who has traveled to or been in close contact with anyone who has traveled to an area or location with widespread, ongoing transmission of Coronavirus "COVID-19" within the last 14 days immediately preceding attempted access to the court facility, per CDC Guidelines, which countries presently include China, Iran, South Korea, and all European countries.
 - c. Anyone who has been asked to self-quarantine by any healthcare provider or who lives with someone who has been asked to self-quarantine.

- d. Anyone who has been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 or has had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed within the last 14 days will not be admitted.
3. Any person not admitted to a court facility for the foregoing reasons will be given a telephone number or other form of communication to contact court officials regarding all alternative means of pursuing critical judicial matters.
4. Each person admitted to the court facility will be required to observe social distancing, which includes remaining six (6) feet away from anyone else while in the court facility, entering or exiting the court facility, or while involved in a hearing, trial or other proceeding.
5. Each person participating in a court proceeding will wear a mask while in court and remove it only to the extent necessary to be heard, understood and/or placed on the record during such proceeding, unless an exception is obtained from the judge or court official conducting the proceeding. Any person observing a court proceeding and who is within the room where the proceeding is being conducted shall also wear a mask, unless an exception is obtained from the judge or court official conducting the proceeding.
6. All court facility employees and members of the public are required to wear a mask or face covering when entering the court facility and when in the offices of the Court, and when dealing with or interacting in person with court facility personnel, unless an exception from the judge or court employee is obtained.
7. Any person working in a court facility with known or suspected COVID-19 shall be required to isolate at home or another location approved by the Georgia Department of Public Health. Any person exposed to COVID-19 in a manner which is likely to result in infection shall be required to quarantine at home or another location approved by the Georgia Department of Public Health.
8. There will be designated spots to sit or stand in the courtroom or court facility which will allow social distancing of at least six (6) feet. Social distancing shall be required by all who enter the court facility, including attorneys, parties, witnesses, spectators and court officials. Social distancing requirements will be enforced.
9. The Court will stagger and schedule its proceedings to minimize the number of people in the court facilities and offices at any particular time. All Court proceedings are open to


the public; we strongly encourage that the people physically attending the proceedings be limited to the interested parties and witnesses or those directly involved in the proceedings. All others may attend via video or online applications, if necessary.

10. The courtroom and all public office areas will be sanitized before and after each session.

11. Any person who meets the criteria for being medically fragile or being at a higher risk of severe illness, per Governor Brian Kemp's Shelter in Place Order and the extensions thereof, will be excused from any court proceeding through the expiration of the Shelter in Place Order and any extension thereof. The current Order mandates that the medically fragile shelter in place through August 11, 2020.

12. With respect to deadlines and filings, all deadlines will be reinstated pursuant to the Statewide Judicial Emergency Order dated July 10, 2020.

So Ordered this 20 day of July, 2020.



B. Shawn Rhodes, Judge
Judge
Abbeville, GA