

IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS FOR THE CORDELE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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 the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, the Superior Courts of the Cordele Judicial Circuit 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 soap and/or hand sanitizer which will be available.
2. Persons falling into one of the following categories shall be denied admittance into any courthouse in the Cordele Judicial Circuit without obtaining an exception from the Chief Judge:
 - a. Anyone entering the courthouse 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 courthouse.
 - 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 courthouse, 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 so diagnosed within the last 14 days will not be admitted.

3. Any person not admitted to courthouse 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 courthouse will be required to observe social distancing, which includes remaining 6 feet away from anyone else while in the courthouse, entering the courthouse, or exiting the courthouse.
5. All courthouse employees and members of the public are required to wear a mask or face covering when entering the courthouse. The wearing of a mask in the courthouse is encouraged after entry into the court facility except when someone is involved in speaking in the courtroom proceedings.
6. Any person working in a court facility with known or suspected COVID-19 shall be required to isolate himself or herself at home or another location approved by the Georgia Department of Public Health. Any person COVID-19 exposure likely to result in infection shall be required to quarantine himself or herself at home or another location approved by the Georgia Department of Public Health.
7. There will be designated places marked with a blue X where each person is allowed to sit while in the courtroom and which will allow social distancing of at least six (6) feet. Social distancing shall be required by all who enter the courthouse including attorneys, parties, witnesses, spectators and court officials. Social distancing requirements will be strictly enforced.
8. The Court will stagger its proceedings to minimize the number of people in the courthouse at any particular time. All Court proceedings are open to the public; we ask that those attending be limited to only those who are interested in the proceedings going forward at that time.
9. The courtroom and all public areas will be sanitized before and after each session.
10. 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 July 15, 2020.

This 10th day of July, 2020.


ROBERT W. CHASTEEN, JR.
CHIEF JUDGE, SUPERIOR COURTS
CORDELE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT