

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF ALCOVY JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA**

**TO THE JUDGES AND CLERKS OF SUPERIOR COURT
TO THE JUDGES AND CLERKS OF PROBATE COURT
TO THE JUDGES AND CLERKS OF MAGISTRATE COURT
TO THE JUDGES AND CLERKS OF JUVENILE COURT**

ORDER DECLARING OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, it has been determined that a judicial emergency exists in this county having been so declared by the Governor and the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court;

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of the undersigned that as of this date that several judges and staff working regularly in the Newton and Walton County Courthouses have tested positive for COVID-19. In response, the county staff need the opportunity to conduct a thorough cleaning of the courthouses, and the undersigned has determined that best practices dictate a further and more concerted effort in social distancing.

WHEREAS, the sudden passing of the Honorable Horace J. Johnson, Jr. of Superior Courts of the Alcovy Circuit on the morning of July 1, 2020 has left this court with the loss of a true public servant resulting in a need to further assess judicial resources.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61, the courthouses of Newton and Walton Counties, Georgia shall be closed beginning Wednesday, July 1, 2020, through and including Tuesday, July 14, 2020, or until further order of the Court. Provided this order is not extended or otherwise modified, the courthouse will re-open for normal operations on Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.; and

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the courts shall remain minimally open to address essential functions, and in particular to give priority to matters necessary to protect health, safety, and liberty of individuals as outlined in the Supreme Court of Georgia's March 14, 2020 Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency and subsequent orders. During this period, one or more deputies of the Sheriff's Offices will be situated inside the front door of the courthouse and available to handle and direct any interested person to the appropriate authority or county officer for any emergency or any need which would otherwise be handled in the courthouse; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that pursuant to the Supreme Court of Georgia's March 14, 2020 Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency and subsequent orders to the extent court proceedings are held, they should be done in a manner to limit the risk of exposure, such as by video conferencing, where possible; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-62, all court deadlines, time schedules or filing requirements are hereby suspended, tolled, or extended for the duration of the judicial emergency as noted above; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Sheriff, or his designee, shall post a copy of this notice on the courthouse doors; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Superior Court, or her designee, shall immediately notify the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Clerks of the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court by sending them a copy of this notice; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the County Managers, or their designee, shall post a copy of this notice and any subsequent modification or extension in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 38-3-63 on the county website or other appropriate public address system.

SO ORDERED this 1st day of July 2020.



John M. Ott, Chief Judge
Alcovy Judicial Circuit

Copy: Hon. Harold Melton, Chief Justice, Georgia Supreme Court
Therese S. Barnes, Clerk, Georgia Supreme Court
Hon. Christopher McFadden, Chief Judge, Georgia Court of Appeals
Steve Castlen, Clerk, Georgia Court of Appeals
District Attorney, Alcovy Judicial Circuit
Public Defender, Alcovy Judicial Circuit