



RICHARD L. WATERS, JR.

PRESIDING JUDGE

MITCHELL STATE COURT &

JUVENILE COURT SO. GA. JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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GUIDELINES FOR COURT OPERATIONS DURING JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

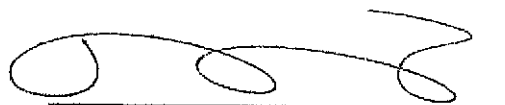
- 1. Scheduling** – In-person proceedings will be scheduled to reduce the number of people entering or congregating in the courthouse or attending court at any one period of time. Times of arrival will be staggered during the day that hearings are in session.
- 2. Remote Hearings**- The Courts will continue remote proceedings in all cases where it is possible and practicable.
- 3. Vulnerable Populations** –Vulnerable individuals are those 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. If summoned to Court, any vulnerable individual shall be entitled to a continuance upon request.
- 4. Social Distancing** – The Courts and Courtroom security staff will ensure distancing in courtroom public common areas, galleries of courtrooms, wells of the courtroom, hallways, elevators, restrooms, or other locations where the public might gather. In order to allow room for social distancing, the courtroom will be filled at no more than 33% of room capacity. Additionally, some seats in the courtroom will be blocked off to prevent groups of larger than 10 from sitting together.
- 5. Hygiene** –Hand sanitizer dispensers will available at various locations around the courthouse, including at the entry and exits from the courtrooms. Pens will not be shared between court participants. Plexiglas shields have been placed on the tables and bench in the Courtroom that will separate Court staff from litigants.
- 6. Screening** – Individuals will be allowed to enter only through one door of the courthouse and will wait for the metal detector while following social distancing guidelines. All individuals will be subject to temperature checks prior to any court proceeding. Individuals feeling feverish or with measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100°F, 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. Inmates from jail facilities who may be transported to a courtroom will also be screened.

7. Face coverings and PPE – Cloth face coverings, mask and other forms of PPE are encouraged and are allowed in the courtroom at all times.

8. Cleaning – Sanitizing of the courthouse and courtroom will be routinely and regularly performed including both before and after all court proceedings. On hearing days, the courtroom will be sanitized during the day.

9. Judge and Court Staff Health – The Court will take precautions to ensure judges and court staff does not enter the courthouse when there is likelihood that they may have COVID-19. All Judges and staff will be subject to temperature checks prior to any court proceeding. Staff is allowed to wear Cloth face coverings, masks or any PPE that they are comfortable with.

Approved on May 12, 2020



Richard Waters, Presiding Judge
Mitchell State Court/
Juvenile Court South Georgia Circuit