

Municipal Court of Tifton



Municipal Court
130 East 5th Street
Post Office Box 229
Tifton, Georgia 31793
229-391-3967 (Office)
229-556-7404 (Fax)

<http://www.tifton.net>

TIFTON MUNICIPAL COURT COURT GUIDELINES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

As both the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia and the Chief Judge of the Tift Judicial Circuit have declared a Judicial Emergency due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is hereby Ordered that following shall constitute the operating guidelines for the Municipal Court City of Tifton.

PRESIDING JUDGE
Chad VanOrman

UPDATED COURT PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

SOLICITOR
Rob Wilmot

**ASSISTANT
SOLICITOR**
Cameron Roberts

CLERK OF COURT
Gail Drayton

- 1. If you have already paid your citation and if your appearance is not mandatory, you need not come to court.**
- 2. If you are not sure whether you must appear for court, please contact the clerk's office at (229) 391-3967.**
- 3. Only defendants and or their attorney should attend the court hearing. Please do not bring any non-essential members (children, spouses, or other family members) to your scheduled hearing time. If you have a childcare issue or other family issue then please contact the Court, at the number above, as soon as possible so that your Court date can be reset or other arrangements can be made.**
- 4. Defendants under 21 may be accompanied by one parent/guardian.**



- 5. All court staff and defendants will be required to wear a face mask and gloves. It is recommended that you wear your own face mask. The court will only provide masks and/or gloves for you only if you can't. Please notify our office at the number above if you are unable to obtain a face mask and/or gloves for your court hearing.**
- 6. Upon arrival please park in the parking lot in the front of the Municipal Court building adjacent to U.S. Highway 82. In the event there are no available parking spots please notify the officer that will be in the parking lot that you have arrived and need to park in a different location. There will be a check in area to notify the court that you have arrived. Upon check-in please return to your vehicle until an officer retrieves you for your hearing. Court starts at 2:00 P.M on Arraignment Day and 1:00 pm on Trial Day; however, this does not mean that you will be called into the courtroom at that time.**
- 7. The courtroom lobby, courtroom, and common areas will be measured out to reflect the six (6) feet social distancing marks by tape and/or orange cones. Officers will also be present to inform you of the procedures that will be taking place. Please listen to the officer's directions and adhere to the signs and markings that will be set in place.**
- 8. Before you enter the courtroom lobby, your temperature will be taken and hand sanitizer provided. You will also be asked: Have you traveled to any high risk areas (or outside of the State of Georgia) in the last fourteen days; Have you had contact with anyone confirmed to have COVID19 (coronavirus) in the last fourteen days; Have you experienced a fever of 100 degrees or greater; difficulty breathing; or persistent cough in the last fourteen days; or are you experiencing fever of 100 degrees or greater; difficulty breathing; or persistent cough now. If the**

answer to any of these questions is yes then you will not be allowed in the Courtroom and your Court date can be reset or other arrangements can be made.

- 9. In order to reduce everyone's risk of exposure, there will be no chairs out to be able to sit. If you need a chair or standing is difficult, please let us know in advance when you check in or by calling the office at the number listed above for us to make arrangements for you. Please follow the directions given by the officers to the procedures that you will need to follow inside of the courtroom.**
- 10. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable attending your court hearing or you are not feeling well please call our office at the number listed above and we will gladly continue your case to a later date.**
- 11. Along with this letter you will also find a Waiver of Rights Form that is usually signed and dated by defendant's that plead guilty and waive their right to have a jury trial at the end of their court hearing. We are asking that if this is applicable to your case please sign and date the form before your court hearing and bring it with you to court. You may turn the form into a specified location at the end of court. This will minimize physical contact with surfaces.**
- 12. The courtroom will be disinfected prior to each court session and areas that are shared by individuals will be disinfected between each person's contact with that area.**
- 13. Based on the size of the courtroom no more than 25 individuals will be allowed to enter the courtroom at one time. The seating is arranged by court personnel to maintain social distancing requirements. No one can modify the seating arrangements or to move the seating without prior court permission.**

14. The Courtroom remains open to the public as required by Law. The above guidelines are intended to be in compliance with public health guidance and with the requirements of the United States and Georgia constitutions and applicable statutes and court rules. These guidelines are intended to allow all of us to move forward together by practicing social distancing and other daily habits to reduce our risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. Please remember: to practice social distancing (specifically, staying 6 feet away from others when you must go into a shared space); frequently wash your hands or use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available; wear face coverings (mask or cloth); avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth; stay home when sick; and avoid frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Chad VanOrman, Judge