

Hephzibah Municipal Court COVID-19 Guidelines

The Supreme Court of the State of Georgia has issued an Order mandating Operations Guidelines to be implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. This court will follow such guidelines to ensure the safety of all parties involved. The following guidelines will be implemented during all court procedures.

Parking—Priority parking will be reserved for employees, officers, and court officials at City Hall. Overflow parking will be directed to Hephzibah Elementary. After checking in and being screened, defendants will remain in their cars. An officer in the parking lot will be notified via radio communication to allow defendants to enter the courtroom.

Screening—Screening will be performed by a Hephzibah Fire Department EMT in a tent on the east side of the building. Temperature will be checked by touchless thermometer upon arrival. Defendants will be asked the following questions:

- Have you traveled to or from any areas in which COVID-19 is particularly active?
 - If so, within the past 10 days have you experienced symptoms of COVID-19 including: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever above 100.0 degrees, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, or new loss of taste or smell?
- Have you been in contact with someone known to have COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
- Have you been tested for the virus? If so, what was the result?
- Have you experienced a fever above 100.0 degrees in the past 72 hours?

Plea Sheet—CSRA Probation will fill out the document for each defendant. Defendants will be given a new pen to sign any necessary paperwork and will keep/discard pen after use.

Pre-Trial Assessment—One defendant at a time will be allowed into the courtroom to speak with the solicitor. Defendant must wear a face mask at all times while inside the building. If he/she does not have a mask one will be provided. Hand sanitizer will be distributed upon entry. All driver's license, insurance, and registration cases will be confirmed prior to court via GCIC to provide current status. The GCIC results will serve as prima facie to prevent the passing of paper documentation from defendant to solicitor.

Indigent Defense—An office in the police department will be dedicated for interviewing as needed.

Trial—6 feet of personal spacing will be observed between all parties needed for a trial. Spacing will be marked on the floor using tape. A parent or spouse may stand next to the defendant if necessary. Only one such person will be allowed in the courtroom with the defendant and will be screened in the same manner as the defendant. No children will be allowed in the courtroom.

Probation Post Trial—The Utilities office will be dedicated for use by CSRA Probation.

Exit/Payment—All defendants will exit through the front door of City Hall (Hwy 88 side). Payments will be processed through the glass window in the lobby.

City Hall will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to the beginning of court. Disinfectant will be used between cases and at other times as needed. Trashcans will be placed at the entrance and exit for disposal of PPE. Masks will be worn by all court personnel at all times.

Failure to Appear for court will receive a thirty-day notice by mail of missing court. Failure to resolve the case at the end of the thirty days will result in a license suspension or bench warrant.

Please contact City Hall prior to your court date if:

- you are currently infected with COVID-19 or in quarantine due to exposure to a person with COVID-19.
- you are a member of an immune-compromised or medically fragile population (or living in a household with someone who is immune-compromised or medically fragile).
- you are over age 65.

Pay online at www.hephzibahgapay.com (8% processing fee) or at Hephzibah City Hall (cash, check, or money order).