

**IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF BLYTHE
STATE OF GEORGIA**

CITY OF BLYTHE)

v.)

ALL CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS)

Defendant)

ANY CHARGE IN WHICH THE
MUNICIPAL COURT OF BLYTHE
BRANCH HAS JURISDICTION

JUDICIAL EMERGENCY ORDER

The Court having been informed of the Judicial Emergency Orders having been entered by the Supreme Court of Georgia regarding the safety measures that are required during the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary for the Court to make adjustments to how court hearings will be conducted to secure the safety of all Blythe employees, all Defendants scheduled to appear before the Court, the attorneys scheduled to appear before the Court, and the general public. Therefore, it is ORDERED that no "in-person" hearings will take place in Blythe Municipal Court until June 24, 2020, unless extended by further order of the Court. All hearings scheduled prior to June 24, 2020 are hereby continued by the Court.

Any Defendant wishing to close their case prior to the expiration of the Judicial Emergency Order may either close their case by paying the payable bond amount online or by mail, if the fine is listed by the Court as payable, by visiting www.blythepayments.com. Each fine paid will result in a bond forfeiture being entered on the Defendant's criminal history, driving history on any reportable moving violation, as applicable. Alternately, if the Defendant wishes to negotiate an alternate charge to which they wish to plead guilty or nolo contendere, the Defendant may contact the Clerk of Court, BY TELEPHONE, at 706.592.6255, to schedule an opportunity to negotiate their case with the Municipal Court Prosecutor, if desired. The Solicitor will determine what method he will use in negotiating cases with Defendants or their attorneys.

Beginning June 24, 2020, the Court will resume conducting in-person hearings. Pursuant to the Judicial Emergency Orders, recommendations of Governor Brian Kemp and the Centers for Disease Control, certain safety measures will be put into place in order to protect the health and safety of the courtroom personnel, the Defendants, and the general public. The following precautions will be strictly followed as an Order of the Court.

1. All individuals entering the building are required to wear a mask, or face covering to cover the nose and mouth, while in the building. In the event that the person entering the building does not have their own mask or face covering, one will be provided for them, while supplies last. All individuals will be allowed to remove their mask while addressing the Court or at the direction of the Court.
2. All individuals entering the building will be subject to a screen of their body temperature to verify that they do not have a fever. Anyone with a fever will not be allowed access to the building and their hearing will be continued.
3. All individuals entering the building will be asked screening questions regarding COVID-19 exposure. All individuals are ORDERED to answer the questions honestly.
4. Anyone who has tested positive for, or is experiencing symptoms of, COVID-19 within the fourteen days prior to their hearing date should contact the Clerk of Court at 706.592.6255 to get a continuance on their hearing. In the event the case has been continued before, the Clerk of Court has the authority to require supporting documentation of their illness in order to have their case continued.
5. All individuals entering the building will be required to maintain social distancing requirements. This will include, but not be limited to, remaining six feet from any other individual in the building, following all directions from Court personnel regarding safety concerns, and comply with all markings in the building to achieve safety guidelines.
6. Based upon the size of the courtroom, no more than 15 Defendants plus court personnel will be allowed to enter the courtroom at a time. The seating will be arranged by the courtroom personnel to maintain social distancing requirements. No one is allowed to modify the seating arrangements or move the seating without prior Court permission. The Community Center Room within City Hall will be utilized for overflow of an additional 20 Defendants. Other Defendants will be asked to remain outside in their car, having provided a phone number upon check-in so that they may be called for their hearing.

7. The Courtroom will be disinfected no less than two hours before Court session.
8. The Court will provide supplies, such as pens, for all Defendants that will be sufficient such that the supplies do not have to be shared between individuals, subject to the availability of those supplies. Each individual is allowed to use their own pen or supplies.
9. Individuals entering the building are encouraged to bring their own hand-sanitizer, but the Court will provide hand-sanitizer to the extent that supplies are available.
10. Public restrooms will be opened and available. However, based upon the size of the restrooms, no more than 1 person at a time will be allowed in the restroom.
11. Any employee working in a court facility with known or suspected COVID-19 shall **isolate** in accordance with the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) Eighth Amended Administrative Order for Public Health control Measures, or any subsequent version thereof. Any employee working in a court facility with COVID-19 exposure likely to result in infection shall **quarantine** in accordance with the DPH Eight Amended Administrative Order for Public Health Control Measures, or any subsequent version thereof. When there is reason to believe that anyone who works or has visited a court facility has been exposed to COVID-19, DPH or the local health department shall be notified by City officials and notification of persons who may have been exposed shall occur as directed by DPH or the local health department.

SO ORDERED this 26th day of August, 2020.



Judge Christopher J. Hudson

Blythe Municipal Court

Blythe, Georgia