

MIDVILLE CITY COURT
COVID-19 OPERATING GUIDELINES

PURSUANT TO GA. SUPREME COURT ORDER DECLARING STATEWIDE JUDICIAL EMERGENCY, DATED
MARCH 14, 2020, AS AMENDED AND EXTENDED

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS:

PLEASE NOTE THAT A FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY RESULT IN ADVERSE ACTION AGAINST THE CASE, PARTIES, AND/OR COUNSEL. COUNSEL AND PARTIES WITHOUT ATTORNEYS (PRO SE PARTIES) ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR READING AND FOLLOWING THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

- A. THE COURT SHALL CONTINUE TO CONDUCT IN PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS IN ALL MATTERS PENDING BEFORE THE COURT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FIRST APPEARANCE, AND PRELIMINARY HEARINGS.
 - a. FIRST APPEARANCE AND PRELIMINARY HEARINGS SHALL BE CONDUCTED VIA VIDEO UTILIZING THE WEBEX VIDEO SYSTEM.
 - b. CIVIL HEARINGS SHALL BE CONDUCTED IN PERSON SUBJECT TO THE PROTOCOL PROVIDED IN THIS ORDER AS IT IS UNFEASIBLE TO MANDATE THE APPEARANCE OF PRO-SE LITIGANTS VIA VIDEO.
 - c. ORDINANCE AND PRE-WARRANT HEARINGS SHALL BE CONDUCTED IN PERSON TO ACCOMADATE FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE COURT MAY ISSUE ARREST WARRANTS.
- B. ALL PERSONS SHALL BE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW THE BEST PRACTICES PROMULGATED BY THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, AND BURKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:
- C. ALL PERSONS SHALL STRICTLY MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING OF NO LESS THAN SIX (6) FEET. ATTORNEYS AND INDIVIDUALS SHALL ARRANGE THEIR INTERACTION AREAS OF THE COURTHOUSE SO AS TO ENSURE THE MINIMUM DISTANCING IS KEPT AND THE COURT SHALL ALLOW SUCH INTERACTIONS AS NECESSARY TO TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM. SAID PARTIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO SET UP TABLES EITHER INSIDE ONE OF THE COURTROOMS OR THE HALLWAY, SIT AT ONE END OF THE TABLE AND HAVE THE DEFENDANT OR OTHER PERSON, WITH WHOM THEY ARE INTERACTING, SIT AT THE OPPOSITE END OF THE TABLE.
- D. THE CLERK SHALL STAGGER THE CALENDAR SO THAT NO MORE THAN TEN (10) CASES ARE SUMMONED TO APPEAR IN AN HOUR IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AMPLE SPACE TO ACCOMPLISH THE SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH ABOVE.

SEE REVERSE FOR CONTINUATION

- E. HAND SANITIZER SHALL BE AVAILABLE AND SITUATED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTROOM AND PARTIES ARE REQUIRED TO CLEAN THEIR HANDS UPON ENTERING AND EXITING THE COURTROOM. MASKS SHALL BE REQUIRED TO BE WORN COVERING THE MOUTH AND THE NOSE, AND NOT THE EYES OR OTHER PARTS OF THE HEAD, OF ALL PERSONS IN THE COURTROOM WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COURT REPORTER AND THE JUDGE.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ILL OR VULNERABLE PERSONS If you are feeling unwell, are over the age of 65, have been around someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus or if you are someone with a preexisting health condition, such as diabetes, obesity, heart or respiratory condition, contact the Court upon receipt of this notice and ask to be excused. You will be required to provide information about your condition. Excuses will be liberally granted, and your case rescheduled to another date. With the Court's approval, in limited circumstances, documentation may be required. **SCREENING** The Sheriff's Department shall screen people coming into the courthouse in a manner consistent with the recommendations of federal, state and local health agencies. If you have a cough or fever or are otherwise experiencing symptoms of sickness or have been around someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus, you have an affirmative duty to disclose this information to court personnel.

CONTEMPT FOR FAILURE TO FOLLOW

ANY PERSON WHO WILLFULLY FAILS TO ABIDE BY THIS ORDER MAY BE HELD IN CONTEMPT BY THE COURT UNDER PENAL OF THE LAW.

The Clerk shall attach a copy of this Order to each Court notice which is sent out for any Court appearances on or after June 1, 2020.

SO ORDERED THIS 14th DAY OF August, 2020.

Andrew A. Palmer

Andrew A. Palmer,

Chief Judge – Midville Municipal Court