

IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF STONECREST, DEKALB COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

**ORDER PROCLAIMING
COURT PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO
THE COVID-19 RECOVERY**

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Honorable Harold D. Melton, as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, issued an Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61. That Order was extended due to the continuing statewide emergency three times, most recently on June 12, 2020, with the final expiration of the statewide judicial emergency set to expire on July 12, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.;

WHEREAS, the statewide judicial emergency remains in effect, and as such, public safety measures have been encouraged by federal, state, and local governments concerning COVID-19;

WHEREAS, this court, under the discretion granted by the June 12, 2020 Order, finds it necessary and proper to adopt guidelines to ensure public safety and protect the health of the general public while conducting limited in-person proceedings; and

NOW THEREFORE, in preparation for in-person court proceedings that are scheduled to occur on June 25, 2020 at the Stonecrest Municipal Court, Chief Judge Johnathan Weintraub and Associate Judge Michael Sheridan, of the Municipal Court of Stonecrest, Georgia issue the following order concerning court proceedings amid the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and recovery.

I. Purpose.

Pursuant to the Georgia Supreme Court's Third Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency on June 12, 2020, this Court may conduct essential and non-essential in-person judicial proceedings, but only in compliance with public health guidance and with the requirements of the United States and Georgia constitutions and applicable statutes and court rules.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide for public access to judicial proceedings and a defendant's right to open courtrooms, while making reasonable provision for

the health and safety of all litigants and all persons attending court or working in the Stonecrest Municipal Court and Stonecrest City Hall.

II. In-Court Proceedings Guidelines.

- 1) All defendants, members of the public, court personnel, and all other visitors attending, appearing, or visiting the courtroom must at all times wear a mask that completely covers the mouth and nose areas.
- 2) Prior to entry into the courtroom, all visitors will be asked the following questions, including but not limited to:
 - i. In the last fourteen (14) days, have you had a persistent cough or fever?
 - ii. In the last fourteen (14) days, have you been around anyone exhibiting coughing, fever, or other similar symptoms?
 - iii. Have you, or have you been living or cohabiting with any person who has, been sick or quarantined since March 1, 2020?
- 3) An affirmative answer to any of the questions listed in section "b" will result with that individual being barred entry into the courtroom and will be sent home immediately. A rescheduling notice will be mailed to any defendant who answered "yes" to any question in section "b" scheduling a return date sixty (60) days from the date of defendants hearing.
- 4) Prior to entry into the courtroom, each person will have their temperature checked through the use of a touchless infrared thermometer. Those individuals who record a temperature of one-hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100°F) or higher will not be permitted entry into the courtroom and will be sent home immediately. Any defendant recording a temperature of 100°F or higher will be sent home immediately and a rescheduling notice will be sent by mail informing them to return for their new court date sixty (60) days from the date of their original court date.
- 5) All visitors must sign in prior to entry into the courtroom and defendants will be required to give court personnel a phone number to call once their case is ready to be heard in the event the defendant is asked to wait in an area outside the courtroom in order to satisfy social distancing requirements.
- 6) No more than twenty (20) persons will be allowed in the courtroom at a time.
- 7) There will be signs indicating sanitation and social distancing guidelines throughout the building and courtroom.

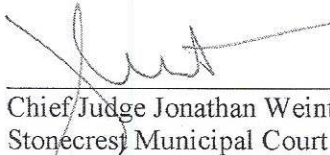
- 8) All visitors and defendants must sanitize their hands prior to entry into the courtroom.
- 9) There will be lines, tape, and/or other material that will inform all visitors where to sit, stand, and walk in order to facilitate proper social distancing.
- 10) Defendants and all visitors shall maintain social distancing guidelines at all times, except when necessity calls for deviation from social distancing guidelines.
- 11) The courtroom will be sanitized before and after each court session.

III. Failure to Adhere to the Guidelines.

THE PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THIS ORDER ARE NECESSARY FOR THE SAFE, EFFICIENT OPERATION OF THE COURT. DEFENDANTS FAILING TO OBSERVE THESE PROCEDURES AND COMPLY WITH SCREENING PROTOCOL WILL BE TREATED AS A FAILURE BY THE DEFENDANT TO APPEAR FOR THE SCHEDULED HEARING.

IT IS ORDERED that this Order will be posted on the Municipal Court's public notification site, at <https://georgiacourts.gov/covid-19-court-operating-guidelines/>, at the entrance of the Stonecrest City Hall Building, and at the entrance of the Stonecrest Municipal Courtroom.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 15th day of JUNE, 2020.



Chief Judge Jonathan Weintraub
Stonecrest Municipal Court



Associate Judge Michael Sheridan
Stonecrest Municipal Court