

SUPERIOR COURTS OF CAMDEN COUNTY **COVID-19 JURY TRIAL RESUMPTION PLAN**

After consultation with the local committee of judicial system participants (the Committee), including the local leaders of the Department of Health (DPH), and as required by the Supreme Court of Georgia's Sixth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency, the Superior Court of Camden County will implement the following plan for the resumption of in-person jury trials in compliance with current public health guidance. This plan in no way supplants the Brunswick Judicial Circuit's May 15, 2020 Covid-19 Operating Plan but shall operate in conjunction therewith. A copy of the Covid-19 Operating Plan is attached hereto as Appendix A.

Jury Summons, Notification and Selection

- Jury selection will take place at the Camden County Courthouse.
- Jury summons will be issued earlier than usual to ensure that requests for hardship excusals or deferments are timely received and reviewed.
- Additional notice will be sent with information on the Covid-19 safety measures implemented by the courts, along with a written jury questionnaire regarding Covid-19 exposure and symptoms. A copy of the jury notice and Covid-19 questionnaire is attached hereto as Appendices B and C, respectively.
- Juror arrival times will be staggered, with the first group appearing at 9:00 a.m. and the second at 11:00 a.m. At least 50 prospective jurors will be summonsed for each time slot.
- Jurors will have designated and clearly marked parking.
- Jurors will be directed to the courthouse entrance and COVID-19 screening station.
- Face masks and/or face shields must be worn by all persons at all time.
- Jurors will be given a juror number and directed to proceed to either Courtroom A where jurors 1-25 will report or Courtroom B where jurors 26-50 will report.
- Jurors will have designated seating marked by juror number and a numbered sign corresponding to his/her number, with the number sign visible to the juror, the Court, and counsel.
- Counsel will conduct *voir dire* from counsel table with microphones and tables sanitized between each use.

- Hand sanitizer stations will be available for use throughout the courthouse.

Jury Trials

- Empaneled jurors will be given a date and time certain to report for trial at the courthouse.
- Given the space limitations and configuration of the various spaces available, trial will be conducted in either Courtroom A or B.
- The jury will deliberate in the grand jury room.
- There will be restrooms designated for jury use only.
- The proceedings will be livestreamed to the jury assembly room to ensure the public's right of access to proceedings and the criminal defendant's right to an open courtroom.
- Jurors, attorneys, parties, and witnesses will enter the courthouse through the front entrance and COVID-19 screening station.
- All persons will be required to sign and sign-in sheet to be used in the event contact tracing becomes necessary.
- Face masks and/or shields will be made available where necessary. Face masks and/or shields must be worn by all persons at all times.
- Each juror will receive an individually packaged notepad and pencil.
- Bottled water will be available.
- Jurors will be permitted to bring their own meals and/or snacks.
- Hand sanitizer and hand sanitizer stations will be available throughout the courtroom, jury assembly room, jury deliberation rooms, and grand jury room.
- To ensure at least six feet of distance between jurors at all times, jurors will be placed in the jury box and throughout the courtroom gallery.
- Jurors will have the same assigned seat throughout trial to assist with any potential contact tracing that may become necessary.
- Space permitting, the victim(s), victim(s)'s immediate family members and defendant's immediate family members, will be allowed in the courtroom during trial. The public will have access to the jury assembly room with live-stream broadcast.
- Where the rule of sequestration is invoked, witnesses will remain outside of the courtroom and jury deliberation room and will wait where the courtroom proceedings cannot be seen or heard.

- Witnesses will not wear a mask while testifying but will wear a transparent face shield.
- The witness stand will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized between each witness.
- If physical evidence is admitted, latex gloves will be made available to all jurors and witnesses. To reduce the handling of evidence, documentary evidence will be displayed digitally on monitors throughout the courtroom. The Court will ensure all trial participants are able to sufficiently view the evidence. Where necessary, jurors may be provided with their own copy of documentary evidence for viewing and/or inspection.
- Sidebar conferences will be handled at the bench with all participants wearing face masks and/or shields.
- Defense counsel shall have access to the defendant for confidential communications as he/she normally would, whether in the courtroom, at counsel table or in the holding cell area adjacent to the courtroom.
- In any case where the trial team consists of more than one attorney or where there are multiple defendants, additional counsel tables and/or chairs may be added as appropriate and in compliance with social distancing requirements.
- All microphones, podiums, courtroom digital equipment, counsel table, gallery seating, jury box seating, and the witness stand shall be thoroughly cleaned throughout each day of trial proceedings.
- The Court will provide breaks during the proceedings in designated space outside of the courthouse for jurors where they can remove their face masks and/or shields and get fresh air while remaining socially distanced from others.

APPENDIX A

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Ronald M. Adams, Clerk of Court, Glynn County

SUPERIOR COURTS OF THE BRUNSWICK JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

FILED
CLERK'S OFFICE

COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN

2020 MAY 15 P 4: 03

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the courthouse buildings, the Superior Courts of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit will implement the following protective measures in compliance with the CDC and GA DPH guidelines:

General

1. All judges will comply with the Statewide Judicial Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Georgia, including with regard to conducting in-person proceedings.
2. All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely, when possible.
3. Pursuant to the Supreme Court's May 11, 2020 Judicial Emergency Order, all other courts conducting in-person proceedings within a Brunswick Judicial Circuit courthouse are strongly encouraged to adopt this Operating Plan so there is uniformity throughout the courts for all litigants and visitors. In addition, all courts are required to conspicuously post the respective courtroom capacity limits in the context of the social distancing guidelines requiring a six-foot distance maintained between all individuals not of the same household, at all times.

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.4°F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 will not report to work or enter the building, and should seek medical advice.
2. Each department within the courthouse will institute protective measures for all employees within that department in compliance with the CDC/GA DPH

guidelines regarding health screening the use of PPE, social distancing and sanitization.

Scheduling

In order to reduce occupancy in the court building at any given time, the judges will coordinate the scheduling of nonessential in-person proceedings.

Vulnerable Individuals

1. Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly those not well controlled, including those who suffer from chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immune disorders, diabetes, obesity, chronic kidney or liver disease, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable individuals.
2. Any vulnerable individual who is to appear for an in-person court proceeding may contact the office of the judge presiding over the proceeding to identify him or herself as a vulnerable individual. Vulnerable individuals who are scheduled for court will be accommodated as necessary, with said accommodations being determined by the presiding judge on a case by case basis in compliance with the current CDC/GA DPH guidelines.

Social Distancing

1. All visitors to the courthouse, including attorneys and their staff, who are not from the same household will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet at all times in all areas of the courthouse.
2. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each Superior Court courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom and courtroom seating will be monitored and enforced by court staff and/or the Sheriff. For individual courtroom capacity, see Appendix A hereto.

3. In each courtroom, counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk, court reporter, and bailiff seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.
4. All non-closed court proceedings shall remain open to the general public as required by law; however, all individuals visiting the courthouse as a spectator or observer not directly involved in a proceeding as an attorney, party litigant or witness, shall be directed to the jury assembly room, or other appropriate room of the courthouse, to view the proceeding electronically.

Hygiene

Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed throughout each courthouse and in each courtroom.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, Sheriff's deputies will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have a cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing; or have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Individuals who indicate yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the courthouse. Each visitor's name and contact information will be collected in the event there is an outbreak and contact tracing needs to be executed. This information will be maintained by security and not available for public dissemination. **All visitors have an affirmative duty to truthfully disclose this information to court personnel.**
2. When individuals attempt to enter the courthouse, Sheriff's deputies will use a thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.4°F will be refused admittance to the courthouse.
3. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperature taken prior to transport. Inmates with symptoms or a temperature equal to or above 99.6°F will not be transported to the court building.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including surgical masks and gloves.

Face Coverings


1. All visitors entering the courthouse are required to wear a face covering (surgical mask) at all times.
2. Visitors should supply their own masks. In the event a visitor does not have his or her own mask, a disposable mask will be provided if the supply is available.

Cleaning

The courthouses and each courtroom will be thoroughly cleaned according to the standards set forth by the CDC and GA DPH after each session of court.

This Operating Plan is implemented with the concurrence of all five active judges of the Brunswick Judicial Circuit and shall apply to all proceedings conducted in any county courthouse and any Superior Court courtrooms within this Circuit.

Date: 5-15-20


STEPHEN G. SCARLETT, SR.
CHIEF JUDGE, SUPERIOR COURTS
BRUNSWICK JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

THIS NOTICE SHALL BE PROMINENTLY POSTED AT ALL COURTHOUSE ENTRANCES, ON THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT WEBSITE OF EACH COUNTY IN THE BRUNSWICK JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, AND SHALL BE DISSEMINATED ELECTRONICALLY TO ALL LOCAL BAR MEMBERS.

APPENDIX A

Appling County Courtroom Capacity

Gallery – 26

Jeff Davis County Courtroom Capacity

Gallery - 24

Wayne County Courtroom A Capacity

Gallery – 28

Wayne County Courtroom C Capacity

Gallery – 22

Glynn County Jury Assembly Room Capacity

Gallery – 36

Glynn County State Court Capacity

Gallery – 10

Camden County Jury Assembly Room Capacity

Gallery – 24

Camden County Courtroom Capacity

Gallery – 18 (with added chairs)

APPENDIX B

IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS OF CAMDEN COUNTY BRUNSWICK JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Please find enclosed a summons for grand jury/jury service. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the criminal justice system in our State has been largely shut down since March 13, 2020. By order dated September 10, 2020, our Supreme Court announced that grand jury and jury proceedings in Georgia may resume so long as specific steps are in place to ensure the safety of our citizens.

On behalf of the judges of this circuit, the Camden County Clerk of Superior Court, law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, the victims of crime, and the accused, we are grateful you are willing to sacrifice your time to meet this civic obligation. We take your safety and physical health seriously. The following are some of the guidelines put in place that will assist in keeping you safe while appearing at Court for jury selection:

- Upon receipt of your summons, please call the Camden County Superior Court Clerk at 912-576-5631 or email the Clerk's Office at jury@co.camden.ga.us to confirm your appearance and receive instructions for reporting. You will be asked to provide your phone number to the Clerk so you can be notified in the event anything changes before your reporting date.
- To ensure your safety, the number of persons reporting for jury selection has been reduced and reporting times have been staggered. To allow for sufficient time and space to check individuals into the courtroom, please plan to arrive at the courthouse at least 30 minutes prior to your scheduled reporting time.
- Upon your arrival to the courthouse, you will be directed to the courthouse entrance and COVID-19 screening station, where your temperature will be taken and you will be asked a series of questions to ensure you are not suffering from any COVID-19 symptoms and determine whether you have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19.
- All persons entering the facility will be required to wear a face mask; or, if you have a medical reason you cannot wear a mask, you must wear a transparent face shield. If you do not have one, the county will provide one for you. Out of respect for you, the courthouse staff and those particularly involved in the Grand Jury process will be wearing masks as well.

APPENDIX B

- The Brunswick Judicial Circuit's COVID-19 Trial Resumption Plan¹ will be observed and enforced at all times. This includes social distancing requirements, limiting the number of persons in the facility, hand sanitizing stations throughout the facility, and the requirement to wear a mask at all times.
- There are marked areas in the courtroom that meet the requirements as set out by the Supreme Court and the Brunswick Judicial Circuit. Please sit in these marked areas. This will allow for sufficient distance between individual jurors.
- The courthouse and courtrooms will be sanitized prior to your arrival and frequently throughout the day.

Accompanying this notice and summons is a questionnaire for you to complete and return. Any information disclosed therein will be reviewed by the Court for COVID-19 screening purposes and promptly filed under seal. Excusal or deferment of jury service shall be at the discretion and approval of the presiding judge.

The criminal justice system cannot function without the involvement of our citizens. We need you. We recognize that there may be reasons why you believe that you cannot serve; however, the legal reasons to be excused from jury service are limited. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your Clerk of Court at 912-576-5631 or via email at jury@co.camden.ga.us.

¹ The Circuit's COVID-19 Trial Resumption Plan may be accessed online by visiting <https://georgiacourts.gov/covid-19-court-operating-guidelines>.

APPENDIX C

COVID-19 HEALTH SURVEY

NAME _____

JUROR # _____

PHONE # _____

EMAIL _____

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE ANY SIGNS/SYMPTOMS OF A RESPIRATORY INFECTION SUCH AS FEVER, COUGH, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, BODY ACHES, OR SORE THROAT?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DO YOU HAVE A FEVER (MORE THAN 100.4 F) ?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HAVE YOU HAD ANY SYMPTOMS OF RESPIRATORY ILLNESS (COUGH, NASAL CONGESTION) IN THE PAST 14 DAYS?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HAVE YOU COME INTO CLOSE CONTACT (WITHIN 6 FEET) WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS A LABORATORY-CONFIRMED COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS WITHIN THE LAST 14 DAYS?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ARE YOU CURRENTLY IN QUARANTINE DUE TO EXPOSURE TO A PERSON INFECTED WITH COVID-19?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ARE YOU A MEMBER OF AN IMMUNE COMPROMISED OR MEDICALLY FRAGILE POPULATION OR DO YOU LIVE IN A HOUSEHOLD WITH SOMEONE WHO IS IMMUNE COMPROMISED OR MEDICALLY FRAGILE?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ARE YOU OVER THE AGE OF 65?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DO YOU HAVE SMALL CHILDREN BUT DO NOT HAVE CHILDCARE DUE TO COVID-19?		