

SUPERIOR COURTS OF GLYNN 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 Coastal Health District of the Georgia Department of Health (DPH), and pursuant to the Supreme Court of Georgia's Sixth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency, the Superior Court of Glynn 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 Covid-19 Operating Plan entered May 15, 2020 but shall operate in conjunction therewith. A copy of the Covid-19 Operating Plan is attached hereto as Appendix A.

Jury Notification and Selection

Given the space limitations in the Glynn County Courthouse, it does not provide sufficient area to house the number of potential jurors necessary for jury selection while still complying with social distancing requirements. Accordingly, after giving due consideration to acoustics, technology needs, lighting, security, ventilation, restroom availability and parking availability, the Committee, along with the Glynn County Sheriff and DPH representatives, determined the Glynn County Selden Park gymnasium would be the most appropriate and comfortable auxiliary space for jury selection purposes. Said space shall be properly designated as an alternative courthouse building, pursuant to the rules.

The plan for jury selection shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- 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.
- Staggered juror arrival times, as deemed necessary
- One-way flow of foot traffic with dedicated entry and exit doors for arriving and excused jurors; dedicated entry and exit door for Court staff; and dedicated entry and exit door for in-custody defendants

- Juror check-in station at juror entrance where temperatures will be taken, symptom and exposure questions asked, and PPE available – i.e., masks available for those without, and transparent face shields available to accommodate where necessary. Masks and/or face shields must be worn at all times
- Dedicated juror seating chart with corresponding juror numbers on each chair and with proper distancing between chairs
- Hand sanitizer stations set up and available throughout the building
- Separate dedicated restrooms for juror use, Court use and for use of in-custody defendants
- Counsel will conduct *voir dire* from counsel table with microphones and tables sanitized between each user
- Extra alternate jurors may be impaneled if deemed necessary
- A point of contact number will be provided to all summoned jurors to report potential exposure to or symptoms of Covid-19 during the *voir dire* process
- Designated outdoor area for jurors to take breaks
- Individual bottled waters to be provided to jurors

TRIAL

After jury selection has been completed empaneled jurors will be given a date and time certain to report for trial at the Glynn County courthouse. Given the space limitations and configuration of the Superior courtrooms and the jury deliberation rooms, one courtroom will be used for the actual trial while a second courtroom will be used as the jury deliberation room. The Superior Court judges will coordinate schedules so as to not have more than one judge conducting jury trials at a time, and other in-person proceedings will be limited to ensure compliance with CDC and DPH distancing guidelines. All jury trial proceedings will be broadcast in real time to the jury assembly room at the courthouse to ensure the public's right of access to judicial proceedings and a criminal defendant's right to an open courtroom.

The plan for conducting jury trials shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- Jurors, attorneys, parties and witnesses will enter the courthouse as they normally would where temperatures will be taken, symptom and exposure questions asked, and PPE made available – i.e., masks available for those without and transparent face shields available to accommodate

where necessary. Masks and/or face shields must be worn at all times while in the courthouse

- Jurors will report to the designated jury deliberation room where they each will receive an individually packaged notepad and pencil, and bottled water will be available
- Hand sanitizer and hand sanitizer stations will be available throughout the courtroom, jury deliberation room and the juror designated restrooms
- To ensure at least six feet of distance between jurors at all times, jurors will be placed with 4-5 seated in the jury box and the remaining jurors spaced throughout the gallery
- Jurors will have the same assigned seat throughout trial to assist with any potential contact tracing that may become necessary
- Only court staff, attorneys, the parties and jurors will be present in the courtroom for trial. The general public will have access to the jury assembly room with live broadcast
- Witnesses will be placed in the various individual witness rooms that accompany each courtroom to enforce the rule of sequestration; witnesses under subpoena will not be entitled to wait in the jury assembly room where the proceedings are being broadcast
- Witnesses in civil jury trials may be able to testify remotely
- Witnesses will not wear a mask while testifying. The witness stand will have plexiglass installed around it to enable each witness to testify without a mask or face shield; however transparent face shields will be available to any witness who requests one
- The witness stand will be thoroughly sanitized between each witness
- Latex gloves will be made available to all jurors and witnesses if they are required to handle physical evidence
- To reduce the handling of evidence, documentary evidence will be displayed digitally on monitors throughout the courtroom to ensure all trial participants are able to view such evidence. Where necessary, every juror may be provided with his or her own copy of documentary evidence
- Sidebar conferences will be handled at the bench as they normally are with all participants wearing appropriate PPE for same. If a defendant chooses to attend sidebar conferences, he or she shall comply with the PPE requirements

- In criminal trials, defense counsel shall have access to his or her client for confidential communications as they normally would, whether that be in the courtroom at counsel table outside the presence of the jury or in the holding cell area adjacent to each courtroom
- In any case where the trial team consists of more than one attorney or in cases with multiple defendants, additional counsel tables and/or chairs may be added as appropriate and in compliance with distancing requirements
- All microphones, courtroom digital equipment, counsel table, gallery seating, jury box seating, and the witness stand shall be thoroughly sanitized throughout each day of trial proceedings

APPENDIX A

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Ronald M. Adams, Clerk of Court, Glynn County

SUPERIOR COURTS OF THE BRUNSWICK JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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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 GLYNN 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 trial 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 Glynn 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 for jury selection:

- Upon receipt of your summons, and no later than November 4, 2020, please confirm your anticipated appearance and receive instructions for reporting by returning your completed Jury Questionnaire and your COVID-19 HEALTH SURVEY by mail in the enclosed envelope, by fax to (912)267-5625 or emailing to glynnjury@glynncounty-ga.gov. We ask you to provide your contact information 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 is reduced and reporting times are staggered. To allow for sufficient time and space to check individuals into the jury selection facility, please plan to arrive at the facility within 30 minutes prior to your scheduled reporting time.
- Upon your arrival to the jury selection facility, you will be directed to the main 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 Plan ¹ 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 face covering at all times.
- The marked areas in the facility meet the social distancing requirements as set out by the Supreme Court and the Brunswick Judicial Circuit. Please sit only in the marked areas, as this will allow for sufficient distance among all prospective Jurors.
- The facility 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 Jury Manager at 912-554-7268.

¹ The Circuit's COVID-19 Trial Resumption Plan may be accessed online by visiting www.glynncounty.org/jury.service.

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?		