

# Georgia Office of State Administrative Hearings

## COVID-19 Protocol for In-Person Hearings

*Last updated: 10/26/2020*

### Entrance

Before gaining access to the courtroom(s) and/or lobby:

- Visitors will be directed to put on a face mask.<sup>1</sup>
- A questionnaire will be administered to assess the visitor's current health/COVID status. Depending on the visitor's answers, OSAH reserves the right to deny access to the courtroom(s) and/or lobby.
- The visitor's temperature shall be taken using a contactless thermometer. **Those with temperatures over 100.0 degrees F will be denied access.**
- If a party to a case (or their legal representative) is denied access for health/COVID reasons, their contact information will be taken down, and they will be informed that **their case will be continued to a later date.**
- If a witness to a case is denied access for health/COVID reasons, the witness's contact information will be taken down, and both the parties and the judge will be informed. No party to a case shall be penalized if a witness is not allowed entry in this instance.
- Once visitors complete the screening successfully, the visitor will be provided hand sanitizer and directed to proceed to the courtroom(s) or lobby.

### Upon Entry

Visitors will be directed as follows:

- To continue wearing masks while in the courtroom(s) and/or lobby.
- To utilize hand-sanitizer dispensers as needed.
- To maintain a minimum of 6 feet of social distance at all times.
- To adhere to occupancy limits in every room, as marked.
- To utilize the one-way exits and entrances, as marked.

### Capacity

If the number of visitors rises to the point where it is difficult to maintain 6 feet of social distance, OSAH staff may ask visitors who arrived early, are waiting to testify, etc. to wait in their cars or elsewhere until they are needed. OSAH staff shall provide instructions on what time the visitor can return to the courtroom(s) and/or lobby.

### Responsive Measures

In the event a staff member is exposed to COVID-19, he or she will be screened from public interaction and public health authorities will be alerted.

### Applicability

The following protocol shall be followed at both OSAH's Atlanta headquarters **and** all borrowed courtroom space throughout the State of Georgia. If a borrowed venue requires additional safeguards beyond this protocol, OSAH shall comply fully with those safeguards.

*This sheet is intended as a summary of current procedures for protecting the health and safety of OSAH employees and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. OSAH shall continually monitor the effectiveness of these procedures. OSAH retains the right to add, change, or otherwise modify these procedures as needed for maximum effectiveness, and to remain in compliance with all legal directives.*

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<sup>1</sup> If a visitor cannot wear a mask for any reason, they will not be allowed in the courtrooms and lobby. A staff member will take down their information and notify the judge so that the case can be continued or arrangements can be made for remote access to the hearing.