

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF BERRIEN COUNTY
ALAPAHA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA**

**TO THE JUDGES AND CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT
TO THE JUDGE(S) AND CLERK OF MAGISTRATE COURT
TO THE JUDGE(S) AND CLERK OF PROBATE COURT
TO THE JUDGE(S) AND CLERK OF JUVENILE COURT**

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ORDER-DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, it has been determined that a judicial emergency exists in this county having been so declared by the Governor and the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court:

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of the undersigned that persons working regularly in the Berrien County Magistrate Court may have been exposed to COVID-19 and are experiencing symptoms and some personnel have had close contact with them.

WHEREAS, despite the implementation of and adherence to designated public health and safety guidelines, employee(s) tested positive for Covid-19. Pursuant to the CDC and Dept of Public Health rules and after consultation with the DPH it has been determined that those who have had "close contact" as defined by the CDC and DPH should self-quarantine for 14 days from the last close contact with an infected person. This requirement has resulted in the Staff of the Magistrate Court being self-quarantined. The Magistrate Court Judge and entire staff are quarantined pending Covid-19 testing and actual medical conditions. The judge and her staff work extremely close together and the chance of exposure is high. Based upon the foregoing, the Berrien County Magistrate Judge made the decision to close the Berrien County Magistrate Court as of 9am on November 18, 2020. On November 18, 2020 the Berrien County Magistrate Judge advised the Court of her decision and requested a Declaration of Judicial Emergency for the Berrien County Magistrate Court. This Court finds that said request is reasonable and prudent and is in the best interest of the public and all courthouse personnel.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61, the Magistrate Court of Berrien County, Georgia shall be closed beginning Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 9am through and including Wednesday, November 25, 2020 or until further order of the court. Provided this order is not extended or otherwise modified, the Berrien County Magistrate Court will re-open for normal operations on Monday, November 30, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that upon the reopening of the Magistrate Court, social distancing will be strictly enforced; and the use of appropriate sanitizers by all occupants of the building or the general public on entering the building.

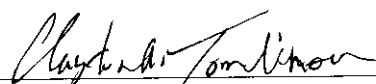
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-62, all court deadlines, time schedules or filing requirements are hereby suspended, tolled, or extended for the duration of the judicial emergency as noted above; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Sheriff or his/her designee shall post a copy of this notice on the courthouse doors, and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Superior Court, or her designee, shall immediately notify the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Clerk of the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court by sending them a copy of this notice, and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, the Court Commission, or its designee, shall post a copy of this notice and any subsequent modification or extension in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 38-3-63 by posting it on the county website or other appropriate public address system.

SO ORDERED this 18th day of November, 2020.



Clayton A. Tomlinson, Chief Judge
Superior Court of Berrien County

Elizabeth Carter, Magistrate Judge
Berrien County Magistrate Court