

FILED

Administrative Minutes
November 30, 2020

Thérèse S. Barnes
Clerk/Court Executive

SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA



**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF WALKER
THE LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

STATE OF GEORGIA

**AMENDMENT TO THE THIRD ORDER DECLARING A JUDICIAL EMERGENCY IN
THE SUPERIOR COURT OF WALKER COUNTY, LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

On July 12, 2020, the Honorable Chief Justice Harold D. Melton of the Supreme Court of Georgia issued the Forth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency. Paragraph V of that Order specifically acknowledges the authority of the Chief Judge of a Superior Court Judicial Circuit to add restrictions to the statewide Order when necessitated by local conditions pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 38-3-61 and section 38-6-32. This authority is re-affirmed in the Eighth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency filed November 9, 2020.

Currently there is a substantial surge in Covid-19 cases, illnesses, and hospitalizations in the four counties of the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit (Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, and Walker Counties). Particularly, Walker County has recently been impacted by an increasing number of Covid cases among court personnel in multiple offices in the Courthouse and among courthouse security and jail staff. These cases also include, attorneys, other members of law enforcement, as well as citizens of our counties.


Our courts have increased in person court proceedings to attempt to appropriately address the needs of our citizens and to address our case backlog. Our courts have followed our Order Establishing Guidelines for In-Person Proceedings of May 18, 2020, as amended in an Order of July 24, 2020. However, at this time, as stated in the Third Order Declaring a Judicial Emergency entered on November 23, 2020, this increase in in-person proceedings is no longer

feasible or safe. Furthermore, due to the recent surge in COVID-19 cases at the Walker County Courthouse, this Court deems it necessary to enter an order to protect the citizens of Walker County, the employees of the Walker County Courthouse and the Walker County Sheriff's department. Therefore, this Court hereby AMENDS the Third Order of Judicial Emergency in the Lookout Mountain Circuit dated November 23, 2020 by **Closing the Walker County Courthouse** for a period beginning today, effective immediately upon the signing of this Order, and ending at 9:00 a.m. Monday, December 7, 2020. The Courthouse shall re-open on December 7, 2020 for regular business following the guidelines established in the Third Order of Judicial Emergency for the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit entered by this Court on November 23, 2020. All offices of the Walker County Courthouse are encouraged to work remotely so as to provide emergency/essential services during this closure order.

By entering this Order, the Court provides an opportunity for an on going cleaning and sanitation of the Walker County Courthouse facilities, as well as an opportunity to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within Walker County.

This Order may be extended in the Court deems necessary.

SO ORDERED, THIS 30th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2020.



KRISTINA COOK GRAHAM
CHIEF JUDGE, SUPERIOR COURT
LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT