

**IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF MACON-BIBB COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA**

IN RE: ORDER DECLARING JUDICIAL :
EMERGENCY :
 :
DATE: July 14, 2020 :
 :
 :

**ORDER EXTENDING DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY AND ADOPTION OF
GUIDELINES FOR COURT PROCEEDINGS AND OPERATIONS**

WHEREAS, on July 10, 2020, the Honorable Harold D. Melton, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, entered the Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency, until August 11, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.

WHEREAS, Section V of the Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency, states said Order does not modify the Chief Judge of a Superior Court judicial circuit the ability to add to the restrictions imposed by the statewide judicial emergency, if said additional restrictions are constitutional, necessitated by local conditions,

WHEREAS, on July 6, 2020, Macon-Bibb County Municipal Court issued an order halting in-person proceedings until July 17, 2020, at 11:59 p.m., which is still in effect at this time.

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2020, the Honorable Howard Z. Simms, Chief Judge of the Macon-Bibb County Superior Court, issued an Amended Local Order Declaring Judicial Emergency, which modified the Order of Chief Justice Melton, suspending all in person court proceedings unless the proceeding is essential or of an otherwise emergency nature for the duration of the Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency. Said Amended Local Order is hereto attached as Exhibit "A".

WHEREAS, as of July 14, 2020, Macon-Bibb County currently continues to experience significant increases in the number of COVID-19 cases on a daily basis.

NOW THEREFORE, the Honorable Crystal Jones of the Municipal Court of Macon-Bibb County, Georgia, DOES HEREBY declare the Municipal Court will suspend in-person operations, including arraignments and trials, effective July 17, 2020, beginning at 12:00 a.m. During this time, the Municipal Court will not be available for any in-person proceedings with the exception of those deemed essential or of

an otherwise emergency nature. The Court is amenable and should be contacted to schedule in-person arraignments and/or trials where the accused and Solicitor's Office have agreed and determined doing so is essential or of an emergency nature.


Court matters related to the Law Enforcement Center, also referred to as Jail Court, shall continue to take place as scheduled, via remote access. This shall not override or circumvent any screening requirements in place per security, that may result in denial of entry, i.e. visibly ill individuals, individuals that wish to conduct business that is excluded due to other current restrictions, failure to comply with the Guidelines for Court Proceedings for Court In the Macon Judicial Circuit, etc.

This suspension of in-person operations in the Municipal Court of Macon-Bibb County, shall be effective July 17, 2020, at 12:00 a.m., and shall terminate on August 11, 2020, at 11:59 p.m., unless otherwise extended.

Upon resumption of in-person proceedings, the Macon-Bibb County Municipal Court shall continue to operate in compliance with the Guidelines For Court Proceedings For Courts In the Macon Judicial Circuit prepared and enacted by the Honorable Howard Z. Simms, Chief Judge of the Superior Court of Bibb County, Macon Judicial Circuit on May 13, 2020, as are hereto attached as Exhibit "B". In addition, the Court shall continue to operate in compliance with the Macon-Bibb County Municipal Court's Court Procedures In Response TO COVID-19, which were prepared and enacted May 12, 2020, and are hereto attached as Exhibit "C". Both sets of procedures have been made available to the public and are also posted online on the Court's webpage.

A copy of this Order shall be served on all affected personnel: the Macon-Bibb County Solicitor-General, Bibb County Sheriff's Office, State Court Probation, Macon-Bibb County Property Maintenance, and Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning.

SO ORDERED this 14th day of July, 2020.


Crystal Jones
Municipal Court Judge
Macon-Bibb County

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF BIBB COUNTY
MACON JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA

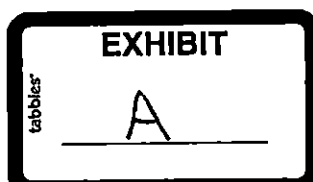
AMENDED LOCAL ORDER DECLARING
JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

On July 10, 2020, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia entered the Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Judicial Emergency.¹ In Section V, that order makes specific provisions for modification thereto by the Chief Judge of the Superior Courts under certain conditions and based on a properly entered order. This local order, therefore, is pursuant to the authority vested in the Superior Court in Section V.

It appears that the middle Georgia area has recently seen a significant increase in the number of diagnosed Covid-19 infections and that, in particular, the Bibb County Courthouse has had multiple positive cases in recent days. As the history of this novel coronavirus has unfortunately proven, its spread through courthouses, wherein individuals are compelled to appear and wherein employees are required to work in relatively close proximity to other employees and to the public, can be rapid and devastating and can drastically increase the numbers of sick and infected people. Further, interaction between the various courts, agencies and personnel of the various courts and courthouses of the Macon Judicial Circuit are likely to contribute to this spread.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, for the personal safety of the general public and courthouse employees circuit wide, that all "in person" court proceedings are hereby suspended, unless the Judge of the Court in question deems the proceeding to be essential or of an otherwise

¹Incorporated and attached hereto as Exhibit A.

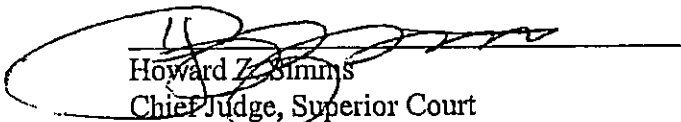


emergency nature, for the duration of the Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT, in the event a Judge finds that an "in person" hearing is a necessity, this Court's previous guidance regarding those appearances, in conjunction with relevant Department of Public Health guidelines, will govern the conduct and safety of those proceedings.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT all other provisions of the Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency remain unmodified and all parties, to the extent possible within the limitations set forth in that order, conduct proceedings virtually or by other available methods so as to have the minimum possible impact on the daily functioning of the Courts.

SO ORDERED this 13th day of July, 2020.



Howard Z. Simms
Chief Judge, Superior Court
Macon Judicial Circuit



SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

FILED

Administrative Minutes
July 10, 2020

Thérèse S. Barnes
Clerk/Court Executive

SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

**FOURTH ORDER EXTENDING DECLARATION OF
STATEWIDE JUDICIAL EMERGENCY**

On March 14, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Honorable Harold D. Melton, as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, issued an Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency pursuant to OCGA § 38-3-61. That Order has been extended three times, with modifications, by orders issued on April 6, May 11, and June 12, 2020. After consulting with the Judicial Council of Georgia, the Judicial COVID-19 Task Force, and other judicial partners, recognizing again that most in-court proceedings compel the attendance of various individuals rather than allowing them to decide how best to protect their own health, and further recognizing that the novel coronavirus continues to spread in Georgia, it is hereby determined that the Order should be extended again.

Courts in Georgia have continued to perform essential functions despite the pandemic. The May 11 extension order also encouraged courts to work diligently to address the backlog of pending cases on a case-by-case basis, and the June 12 extension order announced a plan to reimpose as of July 14 many of the deadlines imposed by law on litigants in civil and criminal cases that have been suspended, tolled, or extended since the initial March 14 Order. This order puts that plan into place and will allow more pending and newly filed cases to move forward in the judicial process in an effort to return to more robust court operations. Given current circumstances, however, this order continues the prohibition on all jury proceedings and almost all grand jury proceedings.

As has been the direction since the original Order, all Georgia courts must continue to conduct proceedings, remotely or in-person, in compliance with public health guidance, applicable statutes and court rules, and the requirements of the United States and Georgia Constitutions, including the public's right of access to judicial

proceedings and a criminal defendant's rights to confrontation and an open courtroom. All courts should continue to use and increase the use of technology to conduct remote judicial proceedings as a safer alternative to in-person proceedings, unless required by law to be in person or unless it is not practicable for technical or other reasons for persons participating in the proceeding to participate remotely. This order further delineates the health precautions required for all in-person judicial proceedings and specifies that courts must adopt operating guidelines consistent with the Georgia Court Reopening Guide and any more specific local public health guidance.

Accordingly, the Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency, which would have expired on Sunday, July 12, 2020, at 11:59 p.m., is further extended, effective Sunday, July 12, 2020, at 11:59 p.m., until Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. All Georgia courts shall continue to operate under the restrictions set forth in that Order as extended, with the following clarifications, modifications, and directions. Where this order refers to "public health guidance," courts should consider the most specific current guidance provided by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), and their local health departments.

I. Continued Prohibition on Jury Trial Proceedings and Most Grand Jury Proceedings

(A) Current public health guidance recommends social distancing and other measures that make it impracticable for courts to protect the health of the large groups of people who are normally assembled for jury proceedings, including jury selection. Accordingly, the suspension of jury trials shall remain in effect and until further order, all courts are prohibited from summoning new trial jurors and grand jurors and from conducting criminal or civil jury trials.

(B) Grand juries that are already impaneled or are recalled from a previous term of court may meet to attend to time-sensitive essential matters, but these grand juries shall not be assembled except when necessary and only under circumstances in which social distancing and

other public health guidance can be followed. A guidance document about the continued authority of grand juries impaneled prior to the issuance of the Order is included in the Appendix to this order. Courts and counsel are reminded that many criminal cases may proceed on accusation and do not require a grand jury indictment.

(C) The Judicial COVID-19 Task Force continues to develop policies, procedures, and templates to allow the safe resumption of jury trials and grand jury proceedings. These materials will be publicized when ready, but it is unlikely that any jury proceedings will begin until September or later.

II. Reimposition of Deadlines on Litigants

(A) As announced in the June 12 extension order, this order hereby reimposes all deadlines and other time schedules and filing requirements (referred to collectively herein as "deadlines") that are imposed on litigants by statutes, rules, regulations, or court orders in civil and criminal cases and administrative actions and that have been suspended, tolled, extended, or otherwise relieved by the March 14, 2020 Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency, as extended, on the following schedule and with the following exceptions and conditions:

(1) Consistent with Section I above, **deadlines for jury trial proceedings (including statutory speedy trial demands), deadlines for grand jury proceedings, and deadlines calculated by reference to the date of a civil or criminal jury trial or grand jury proceeding shall remain suspended and tolled.** This provision does not apply to deadlines calculated by reference to the date of non-jury (bench) trials. Until grand jury proceedings are generally authorized, statutes of limitation in criminal cases shall also remain tolled.

(2) **All other deadlines imposed on litigants shall be reimposed effective July 14, 2020, as further explained below.**

(3) **In cases that were pending before the March 14 Order, litigants will have the same amount of time to file or act after**

July 14 that they had as of March 14. For example, if an answer in a civil case was due on March 20, that answer will now be due on July 20, and if a criminal defendant's pretrial motions were due on March 23, they will now be due on July 23.

(4) In cases filed between March 14 and July 13, 2020, the time for deadlines will begin running on July 14. For example, if a civil complaint was filed in June and the answer would have been due 30 days later, that 30-day period will begin on July 14 and the answer will be due on August 13.

(5) In cases filed on or after July 14, 2020, litigants shall comply with the normal deadlines applicable to the case.

(6) If the reimposed deadline falls on a weekend or legal holiday, the deadline will as normal be the next business day. See OCGA § 1-3-1 (d) (3).

(7) Any extension of time for a litigant's filing or action that was granted by a court, or was agreed or consented to by the litigants as authorized by law, before July 14, 2020 shall also extend the time for that filing or action after July 14. For example, if a litigant's filing was initially due on March 10 but she was granted a 10-day extension of that deadline (to March 20), the filing will be due on July 24 (10 days after July 14).

(8) Litigants may be entitled to additional time based on the provisions of a local judicial emergency order applicable to their case if such an order tolled applicable deadlines before the March 14, 2020 Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency or tolls applicable deadlines after July 14, 2020.

(9) The tolling and suspension of deadlines imposed on litigants in civil and criminal cases that are calculated by reference to terms of court shall be lifted as of July 14, 2020, and any regular term of court beginning on or after July 14 shall count toward such deadlines. See also the May 4, 2020 Guidance on Deadlines and Time Limits Defined by Reference to Terms of Court included in the Appendix.

(10) The 122 days between March 14 and July 14, 2020, or any portion of that period in which a statute of limitation would have run, shall be excluded from the calculation of that statute of limitation.

(11) Litigants may apply in the normal way for extensions of reimposed deadlines for good cause shown, and courts should be generous in granting extensions particularly when based upon health concerns, economic hardship, or lack of child care.

(B) Recognizing the substantial backlog of pending cases, deadlines imposed on courts shall remain suspended and tolled. All courts should nevertheless work diligently to clear the backlog and to comply with usual deadlines and timetables to the extent safe and practicable.

(C) If before July 14 a court reimposed deadlines by order in a specific case based on the authority to do so granted by prior extension orders, the case-specific order reimposing deadlines shall control over the deadlines for the same filings or actions reimposed by this statewide order.

(D) If in a divorce or adoption case a time period required by law actually passed or passes before the court entered or enters a consent order, consent judgment, or consent decree regarding the divorce or adoption, such order, judgment, or decree shall not be invalid based on any suspension or tolling of the applicable period by the March 14 Order as extended.

III. Proceedings Conducted Remotely Using Technology

(A) All courts should continue to use and increase the use of technology to conduct remote judicial proceedings as a safer alternative to in-person proceedings, unless required by law to be in person or unless it is not practicable for technical or other reasons for persons participating in the proceeding to participate remotely.

(B) Courts should understand and utilize the authority provided and clarified by the emergency amendments made to court rules on videoconferences and teleconferences.

(C) Courts may compel the participation of litigants, lawyers, witnesses, and other essential personnel in remote judicial proceedings, where allowed by court rules (including emergency amendments thereto). Such proceedings, however, must be consistent with public health guidance, must not impose undue burdens on participants, and must not be prohibited by the requirements of the United States or Georgia constitutions or applicable statutes or court rules.

(D) In civil, criminal, juvenile, and administrative proceedings, litigants may expressly consent in the record to remote proceedings not otherwise authorized and affirmatively waive otherwise applicable legal requirements.

(E) Courts must ensure the public's right of access to judicial proceedings and in all criminal cases, unless affirmatively waived in the record, a criminal defendant's rights to confrontation and an open courtroom.

IV. In-Person Proceedings Under Guidelines for Safe Operations

(A) Courts have discretion to conduct in-person judicial proceedings, but only in compliance with public health guidance and with the requirements of the United States and Georgia constitutions and applicable statutes and court rules, including the public's right of access to judicial proceedings and a criminal defendant's rights to confrontation and an open courtroom.

(B) No court may compel the attendance of any person for a court proceeding if the court proceeding or the court facility in which it is to be held is not in compliance with this order, including in particular large calendar calls. Courts are also prohibited from compelling in-person participation in any court-imposed

alternative dispute resolution session that is to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with applicable public health guidelines.

(C) Each court shall develop and implement operating guidelines as to how in-court proceedings generally and particular types of proceedings will be conducted to protect the health of litigants, lawyers, judges, court personnel, and the public.

(1) The Judicial Council Strategic Planning Committee and the Judicial COVID-19 Task Force have issued a bench card entitled "Georgia Court Reopening Guide," which is included in the Appendix and should be used as the template for such operating guidelines, which at a minimum should include all subject matters contained therein. Courts should also consider guidance from local health departments and guidance provided by CDC and DPH; if local public health guidance is more restrictive than the bench card, the local public health guidance should be followed instead.

(2) With regard to everyone who works in a court facility, the operating guidelines shall require isolation of any person with known or suspected COVID-19 and quarantine of any person with COVID-19 exposure likely to result in infection, in accordance with the DPH Seventh Amended Administrative Order for Public Health Control Measures, a link to which may be found in the Appendix, or any subsequent version thereof.

(3) When there is reason to believe that anyone who works or has visited a court facility has been exposed to COVID-19, DPH or the local health department shall be notified and notification of persons who may have been exposed shall occur as directed by DPH or the local health department.

(4) To the extent operating guidelines previously implemented by courts do not comply fully with the requirements of this order, courts shall develop and implement revised guidelines within 10 days of this order.

(D) Courts of different classes that share courthouse facilities or operate in the same county should coordinate their operating guidelines,

and should seek to coordinate operating guidelines with non-judicial entities sharing courthouse facilities.

(E) Each court must submit its operating guidelines to the Administrative Office of the Courts at <https://georgiacourts.gov/covid-19-court-operating-guidelines-form/> to be posted at <https://georgiacourts.gov/covid-19-court-operating-guidelines/> as a centralized website available to litigants, lawyers, and the public. Operating guidelines also should be prominently posted at courthouse entrances and on court and local government websites to provide advance notice to litigants, lawyers, and the public.

(F) Operating guidelines shall be modified as public health guidance is modified, and shall remain in effect until public health guidance indicates that they are no longer required.

V. Discretion of Chief Judges to Declare More Restrictive Local Judicial Emergencies

(A) Nothing in the Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency as extended and modified limits the authority of the Chief Judge of a superior court judicial circuit under OCGA §§ 38-3-61 and 38-3-62 to add to the restrictions imposed by the statewide judicial emergency, if such additional restrictions are constitutional, necessitated by local conditions, and to the extent possible ensure that courthouses or properly designated alternative facilities remain accessible to carry out essential judicial functions. A Chief Judge may impose such additional restrictions only by a properly entered order.

(B) No court may disregard the restrictions imposed by the Order as extended and modified.

VI. Guidance on Application of the Order

Included in the Appendix are several guidance documents that clarify the application of the Order in particular contexts. Additional guidance documents may be posted on the AOC's website at <https://georgiacourts.gov/judicial-council/aoc/>. Guidance related to the tolling of deadlines should be read in light of the reimposition of deadlines by this order and by orders in specific cases.

VII. Professionalism

With regard to all matters in this challenging time, all lawyers are reminded of their obligations of professionalism. Judges are also reminded of their obligation to dispose of all judicial matters promptly and efficiently, including by insisting that court officials, litigants, and their lawyers cooperate with the court to achieve that end, although this obligation must not take precedence over the obligation to dispose of matters fairly and with patience, which requires sensitivity to health and other concerns raised by court officials, litigants and their lawyers, witnesses, and others.

VIII. Notice Provisions

(A) Notice will be provided as to the expected termination of the Order as extended and modified at least one week in advance to allow courts to plan for the transition to fuller operations.

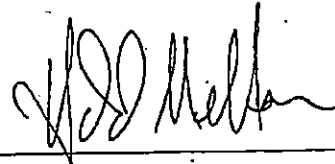
(B) The clerks and court administrators of trial courts that conduct jury trials and convene grand juries will be provided sufficient notice of the resumption of jury proceedings to allow the complicated process of summoning potential jurors to be completed.

(C) The impact of COVID-19 varies across the state, and the level of response and adjustment will likewise vary among courts. Courts should make available to the public the steps they are taking to safely increase operations while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognizing that not all courts have a social media presence or website, the Administrative Office of the Courts will continue to post court-specific information as it becomes available on the AOC website at <https://georgiacourts.gov/covid-19-preparedness/>.

(D) Pursuant to OCGA § 38-3-63, notice and service of a copy of this order shall immediately be sent to the judges and clerks of all courts in this State and to the clerk of the Court of Appeals of Georgia, such service to be accomplished through means to assure expeditious receipt, which include electronic means. Notice shall also be sent to the media, the State Bar of Georgia, and the officials and entities listed below and shall constitute sufficient notice of the issuance of this order to the affected litigants, counsel for the affected litigants, and the public.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 10th day of July, 2020, and effective July 12, 2020, at 11:59 p.m.



Chief Justice Harold D. Melton
Supreme Court of Georgia

APPENDIX

Guidance on Tolling of Filing Deadlines (March 27, 2020)

Guidance on Tolling of Statutes of Limitation (April 6, 2020)

Guidance on Deadlines and Time Limits Defined by Reference to Terms
of Court (May 4, 2020)

Guidance on Grand Juries (May 4, 2020)

Further Guidance on Grand Juries (May 11, 2020)

Georgia Court Reopening Guide (June 11, 2020)

DPH Seventh Amended Administrative Order for Public Health Control
Measures (June 16, 2020)

cc:

Governor Brian P. Kemp
Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan
Speaker David Ralston
State Bar of Georgia
Administrative Office of the Courts
Judicial Council of Georgia
Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia
Department of Juvenile Justice
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
Council of Accountability Court Judges
Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution
Institute of Continuing Judicial Education of Georgia
Georgia Council of Court Administrators
Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism
Judicial Qualifications Commission
Association County Commissioners of Georgia
Georgia Municipal Association
Georgia Sheriffs' Association
Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police
Georgia Public Defender Council
Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia
Department of Corrections
Department of Community Supervision
Georgia Court Reporters Association
Board of Court Reporting
State Board of Pardons and Paroles
Constitutional Officers Association of Georgia
Council of Magistrate Court Clerks
Council of Municipal Court Clerks

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA
Clerk's Office, Atlanta

I certify that the above is a true extract from the
minutes of the Supreme Court of Georgia.
Witness my signature and the seal of said court hereto
affixed the day and year last above written.

 , Clerk

Re: Guidelines For Court Proceedings For Courts In The Macon Judicial Circuit
(In compliance with the Second Order Extending Declaration Of Statewide Judicial
Emergency)

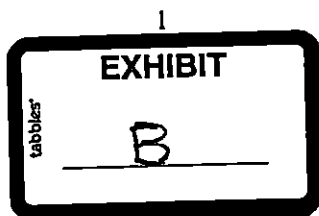
As with everything else, the coronavirus has significantly disrupted the judicial system. By order of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, court functions have all but ceased for the better part of three months. A Second Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency has now been issued. That Order extends the prohibition of any jury trials at least until Friday, June 12, 2020 at 11:59pm. While it does allow for the resumption of some non-jury court functions, the restrictions and limitations do not allow anything approaching what we once knew as "normal." Please refer to that Order for information as to the parameters for operation of the courts.

To comply with Section Four of the Chief Justice's Order, this memorandum will serve as the written guidelines for proceedings in the Courts of the Macon Judicial Circuit. The operative term is "guidelines. " Each judge and each court will necessarily have the leeway to vary the guidelines as particular circumstances dictate.

Access: Anyone coming to the courthouse to attend any court proceeding will be required to submit to a screening at the entrance to the courthouse. The particular area for the screening will be determined by security. This screening will include questions as to whether the person is experiencing fever, shortness of breath, persistent cough or sore throat, or any other symptoms of respiratory infection. The visitor will also be asked questions concerning their travel and possible exposure to COVID-19 within the last fourteen days. As the availability of equipment permits, each person's temperature will be taken using a no-touch thermometer. Should concerns be raised as a result of this screening, the Court will immediately be notified, and a decision will be made as to whether that person will be allowed in the building. If they are not permitted entry, the particular Court/Judge presiding in their proceeding is to be contacted so that the matter can be heard by alternative remote means or continued to a later date.

Social Distancing: For all court proceedings, social distancing will be required. Within the courtrooms, there must be a six-foot space between every person. For example, a litigant must sit at one end of the table and his/her counsel at the other end. Members of the public attending the proceeding must sit six feet apart in the gallery; the courtroom will be considered "full" when that distancing has reached its capacity. In the hallway outside of the courtrooms the floor will be marked at six-foot intervals; those in the hallway will be required to abide by this distancing. When capacity has been reached in the hallway, security will help others to a location outside the building to wait until space is available.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): All persons entering the courthouse for business should wear face masks or face covering. Further, all participants in litigation will be required to wear protective masks in the courtrooms and while in the courthouse. This includes counsel, parties and witnesses. Applicants for weapons carry permits and marriage licenses are also required to wear face masks or face coverings. Members of the public attending the proceedings are strongly urged to wear masks; if a sufficient number of masks are available to security or to the court, then members of the public will be provided same and required to wear



them at all times when in courtroom or the hallway.

Remote Judicial Proceedings: All judges will continue to use technology to provide an alternative to in person proceedings. Our preferred methods are Microsoft Teams, Zoom and WebEx (accommodations might be possible for alternative platforms on an availability and cases by case basis). Whether to use these platforms in a pending matter will be within the sole discretion of the judge presiding in that case. Should the decision be made to use this alternative, litigants, lawyers, witnesses and other essential personnel must comply with this decision (See Section Three of the Chief Justice's Order). Of course, to the extent possible, in person proceedings are preferred by all participants; but the circumstances may not allow this luxury. Finally, no proceeding - whether in person or remote - will be conducted if doing so would violate a constitutional right of a litigant.

Types of Proceedings: While the most recent Order from the Chief Justice allows in court proceedings, whether to conduct those proceedings - and how - depends on the nature of the event. For example, some hearings involve only the parties and counsel; these are more amenable to being held in person (domestic rules, motions for new trial, pre-trial motions, etc.). Other proceedings traditionally involving a large number of people will - if held in person - be subject to more modifications and restrictions (arraignments, child support, calendar calls, etc.). Each judge will determine whether to hold these proceedings in person, and if so, whether to limit the number of hearings, whether to stagger the times for appearance, etc. Questions as to whether and how a proceeding will be conducted are to be addressed to the judge for that proceeding.

These guidelines will remain in effect at least as long as any Judicial Emergency Order exists. The length and degree of restriction may also depend on what is deemed necessary in the Macon Judicial Circuit and allowed by statute (See O.C.G.A. §§ 38-3-61 and 38-3-62). It is not the intention of any judge of this circuit to impose any restriction for any period of time beyond what is absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of all who enter our courthouses. As do you, we look forward to the day when the administration of justice returns to its normal course. Until then, we will work with all who have business before the court to find a way to provide access and a fair hearing for their concerns.

Macon-Bibb Municipal Court
COURT PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

DEAR DEFENDANTS WITH UPCOMING COURT DATES:

Ticket fine and payment information are available online at www.maconbibb.us/municipal-court/ via Municipal Court's webpage; or by calling **478-257-5012 to pay by phone.**

If you wish to dispute the violation, it is your right to appear in court. If you have already paid your citation, your appearance is not mandatory. For many traffic violations, a court appearance is not mandatory.

Examples of violations that are a mandatory appearance include:

No Insurance	Hit and Run
Suspended Registration	Reckless Driving
Driving While License Suspended	Speeding 40+ Over Limit
Driving While Unlicensed	Theft by Shoplifting
Permitting Unlicensed Person to Drive	Possession of Marijuana
Resisting/Interfering with Officer	Possession of Drug Related Objects

If you are not sure whether you must appear for court, please contact the clerk's office: (478) 751-7154 or court@maconbibb.us.

If you do not have an attorney and would like information about resolving your case without a court appearance, contact the Solicitor's office at 478-621-6572 or municipalcourtprosecutor@maconbibb.us. There is no cost to you for contacting the Solicitor and you may be able to accept a plea recommendation to resolve your case without appearing in court.

In response to the threat posed by the COVID-19 virus, Macon-Bibb Municipal Court has implemented changes to court hearing procedures. Please be advised of the following:

- When you arrive for your court hearing, you will check in at the main entrance; 2nd floor of the Bibb County Courthouse, 601 Mulberry St, Macon, GA 31202. A Court Security staff member will ask that you provide your name; then give you a court time as to when it is your time to meet with the Prosecutor and Judge. You will be asked to return to your car and wait in the parking lot until that return time.
- Only the Defendant listed on the citation will be allowed to enter the court, with their attorney if applicable. Individuals under 21 years of age may be accompanied by one parent/guardian.
- No friends, family members, or children may enter the courtroom. If you encounter a childcare issue, please contact the clerk's office prior to your hearing. Continuances will be granted. Defendants who are 65 years of age or older and



are not comfortable coming to court due to increased risk may contact the clerk's office prior to the hearing date. Continuances will be granted.

- **Any Defendant who is ill will not be permitted to enter the courthouse.** If you do not feel well, please stay at home and call the clerk's office at 478-751-7154. If necessary, you may email court@maconbibb.us so that you can be contacted. Continuances will be granted.
- **Defendants will be encouraged to wear a face covering (mask or cloth) the entire time while inside of the courthouse building.** (Los acusados deben traer y usar una máscara facial (se permiten máscaras de tela) todo el tiempo mientras estén dentro del edificio del tribunal).
- **Defendants who require an interpreter for court proceedings please contact the clerk's office at 478-751-7154 or court@maconbibb.us prior to your court date.** (Los acusados que requieran un intérprete, comuníquense telefono numero de 478-751-7154 inmediato para obtener mas informacion por favor).
- **All Defendants and staff must always observe at least six feet of social distance.**

In summary: Please arrive for your court hearing at the time noted on your hearing notice as the court will be operating on a staggered hearing schedule. If your report time is not printed on your notice, please report to the Courthouse no later than 8:00 a.m. to obtain your report time. When you arrive for your court hearing, you will check in at the main entrance of the Bibb County Courthouse located at 601 Mulberry Street, Macon, GA 31202. The main entrance is located on the 2nd Floor. Court Security will ask that you require that you complete the necessary court screening process, will obtain your name, and ask which court you are reporting to. They will verify what time you are scheduled to report. If you have arrived too early, you will be told what time you are to report and asked to leave the Courthouse and return at your scheduled time.

If a report time is not printed on your notice, you may contact Municipal Court via email for your report time at 478-751-7154 and/or court@maconbibb.us, no later than 24 hours prior to the date of your hearing, Monday through Friday 8 am – 5 pm only, to obtain your report time.

Sincerely,

Clerk and Staff of Macon-Bibb Municipal Court