

City of Woodbury Municipal Court
COVID-19 Response Plan



Beginning August 18, 2020, the court will resume conducting in-person hearings. In order to comply with the orders of the Supreme Court of Georgia and recommendations of the Centers of Disease Control, certain safety measures will be put in place to protect the health and safety of the defendants, court personnel, and the public.

The following precautions will be strictly enforced and followed as an order of the court.

Operating Guidelines

Procedures

Court scheduled notices with assigned court times have been, and will be, mailed to individuals with future court dates, until necessary, along with a copy of Woodbury Municipal Court procedures in response to COVID-19.

Day of Court

One police officer and the court clerk are stationed outside prior to entry into the building. They handle health screenings. Health screenings are as follows:

- a. Temperature checks are conducted within the 100.3 guidelines as established by the Centers for Disease Control guidelines.
- b. COVID-19 questionnaires
- c. Issuance of mask
- d. Sanitization of hands—Hand Sanitizer shall be provided.

COVID-19 questionnaires are completed prior to entry; if an individual answers 'YES' to any of the COVID-19 health screening questions, the individual will be given a continuance. The individual is required to sign the questionnaire which will be scanned and filed with the individual's citation.

Individuals will be asked to answer the screening questions listed below:

1. Are you age 65 or older
2. Do you have children with you due to no childcare
3. Are you or a member of your household immune-compromised

4. Within the last 14 days, have you or someone in your household experienced COVID-19 symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19 or awaiting test results
5. Have you traveled to or from areas where COVID-19 is particularly active

Any individual found to have a temperature of 100.3 degrees or higher will not be allowed access into the building and their hearing will be continued to the next available court date.

All individuals who are members of a vulnerable population (such as persons over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions) are encouraged to bring that to the attention of the court prior to any court appearance so that reasonable alternatives can be explored.

All individuals, including court staff, are required to wear court issued face mask or their personal mask covering the nose and mouth.

All individuals, including court staff must maintain required social distancing requirements. This will include, but will not be limited to, remaining six feet from any other individual in the building and seating area in the courtroom.

The courtroom will be disinfected prior to each court session and areas that are shared by individuals will be disinfected between each person's contact with the area.

The court will provide supplies such as pens for all defendants or they may use their own pens.

Based on the size of the courtroom no more than 30 individuals will be allowed to enter the courtroom at a time. The seating will be arranged by court personnel to maintain social distancing requirements. No one can modify the seating arrangements or to move seating without prior court permission.

Courtroom personnel will direct how many people can enter the building at one time. If there are more people waiting to enter the building than can be allowed, those individuals will be required to wait in their vehicle. Once they are allowed to enter the building, the court personnel will notify the individual that they may proceed to the courtroom. Security/Health screening will take place prior to entering the courtroom.

Individuals entering the building are encouraged to bring their own hand-sanitizer, but the courtroom has been equipped with hand-sanitizer.

In order to comply with the CDC physical distancing guidelines, we ask that only defendants and/or their attorney attend the court hearing. No one other than the defendant and the attorney will be allowed in the building.

Defendants ages 21 and under may have one parent or guardian attend the court hearing with them. Individuals are asked to contact the court if they are not able to comply with this request.

If it is necessary for the defendant to meet with probation, the Probation Officer will set up the meeting room considering the social distancing six foot requirement. Once the probation procedures have been completed, the defendant shall exit the building.

More Information

These guidelines shall apply to all open courtroom matters, including but not limited to, First Appearance Hearings/Probable Cause Hearings/Bond Hearings, Arraignments, Motions Hearings, Probation Revocation Hearings, and Bench Trials.

Defendants who request a continuance because of COVID-19 concerns shall be granted a 30 day continuance if they are a member of an at-risk group; or if they have small children and no available childcare; or they have been directly exposed to someone suffering from COVID-19.

All staff members who have business or provide services during courtroom sessions shall be required to wear protective masks.

Individuals are encouraged to visit the City of Woodbury website for more information. www.cityofwoodburyga.gov