

IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS OF THE SOUTHWESTERN JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA

CORONAVIRUS SAFETY ORDER

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of Georgia on July 10, 2020, has entered a Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency;

WHEREAS, said order encourages the Superior Courts of the State of Georgia to institute written guidelines as to how in court proceedings will be conducted in light of the COVID-19 pandemic through August 11, 2020;

WHEREAS, the Superior Court judges of the Southwestern Judicial Circuit wish to provide some guidance to the personnel, attorneys, litigants, and members of the public who will need to attend Superior Court proceedings during the term of the emergency order;

NOW WHEREFORE, the Superior Courts of the Southwestern Judicial Circuit institute the following guidelines which shall be posted at all Courthouse and Superior Courtroom entrances throughout the Southwestern Judicial Circuit;

ALL PERSONS ATTENDING SUPERIOR COURT PROCEEDINGS ARE ADVISED OF THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

1. No person should enter the courthouse and/or any courtroom who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 including, but not limited to fever, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty in breathing. Furthermore, any person who has been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 shall not enter the courthouse and/or courtroom.
2. All persons shall strictly maintain social distancing of not less than six feet. Attorneys, parties, courtroom personnel, and all other persons shall arrange their interactions within the courthouse and within the courtroom so as to ensure that minimum distancing is kept, and the court will allow such interactions as necessary to take place inside and outside the courtroom.
3. The number of people entering the courtroom shall not exceed that number which will allow for the exercise of social distancing. In the event the number of people seeking to enter the courtroom exceeds the maximum capacity, the presiding judge should be contacted so that remedial measures may be taken.

4. Any person entering the courthouse and/or courtroom should wear a mask or facial covering which covers the mouth and nose of said person (not the eyes or other parts of the head). To the extent feasible, the Sheriff and/or county shall provide masks to those desiring the same who are not in possession of a mask.

5. Hand sanitizer shall be made available and situated at the entrance of the courtrooms and all individuals should clean their hands upon entering and exiting the courtroom with said hand sanitizer.

6. The Sheriff's deputy assigned to the courtroom during hearings shall be responsible for making sure that these guidelines are followed.

7. People who have high risk of COVID-19 infection (including persons over the age of 65) and who are in need of accommodations should contact their attorney, or the presiding judge's office if they are unrepresented, prior to their court appearance.

8. This Order shall remain in effect until the expiration of any Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency.

SO ORDERED this 21st day of July, 2020



R. RUCKER SMITH, CHIEF JUDGE
SUPERIOR COURT
SOUTHWESTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT