

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF OCONEE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
(Bleckley, Dodge, Montgomery, Pulaski, Telfair and Wheeler Counties)

STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

ORDER

The undersigned Chief Judge of the Superior Court for the Oconee Judicial Circuit of Georgia does hereby declare the existence of a judicial emergency in Montgomery County effective March 27, 2026 upon her own motion and upon the recommendation of the Montgomery County Commissioners. The nature of the emergency is the release of hazardous smoke into the building due to an apparent fault in the building's heating and air unit which caused the building to be evacuated. The building remains closed to the public and the heating and air unit inoperable.

Accordingly, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61, the Honorable Chief Judge Sarah F. Wall of the Superior Court of the Oconee Judicial Circuit **DOES HEREBY ORDER AND DECLARE** the existence of a Judicial Emergency in Montgomery County. The nature of this emergency is the closure of the Montgomery County courthouse due to hazardous smoke which filled the building and remains a respiratory hazard to anyone entering the building. The duration of this emergency shall be March 27, 2026 until April 6, 2026. The Judicial Emergency shall expire on April 6, 2026, unless extended by further order.

WHEREAS, the emergency affects the regular operation of the Juvenile and Superior Court of Montgomery County, Georgia. The Clerk of Court's office will be closed until such time as the smoke fumes have been remediated. Alternative sites for court functions are being explored in the event that the building remains closed beyond the initial period of this Order. To the extent possible, the Court shall continue to utilize video or telephone conference for emergency and critical functions.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, due to the closure and suspension of normal courthouse operations and that the Clerk of Court cannot provide an alternative location to conduct business at this time, the Court hereby suspends, tolls, extends, and otherwise grants

relief from all deadlines or other time schedules of filing requirements imposed by otherwise applicable statutes, rules, regulations, or court orders, whether in civil or criminal cases or administrative matters, including, but not limited to:

1. A statute of limitation;
2. The time within which to issue a warrant;
3. The time within which to try a case for which demand for speedy trial has been filed;
4. The time within which to hold a commitment hearing;
5. A deadline or other schedule regarding the detention of a juvenile;
6. The time within which to return a bill in indictment or an accusation or to bring a matter before a grand jury;
7. The time within which to file a writ of habeas corpus;
8. The time within which to file discovery or any aspect thereof is to be completed;
9. The time within which to serve a party;
10. The time within which to appeal or to seek the right to appeal any order, ruling, or other determination; and,
11. Such other legal proceedings as may be determined to be necessary.

Said tolling, extension, or other relief shall extend until Monday, April 6, 2026 when the Montgomery County Courthouse is expected to resume normal operations.

Thus, the undersigned hereby makes this declaration of a judicial emergency affecting the Juvenile and Superior Court. All judicial functions in said courts shall cease unless it can be conducted via video or teleconferencing.

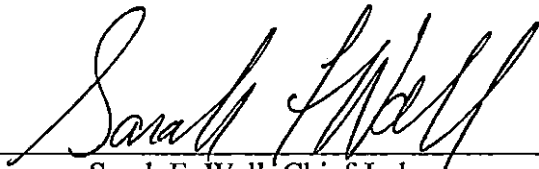
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all judicial staff in the Montgomery County courthouse are to vacate their offices and the courtroom closed until further notice and should only reenter the building upon consultation with County officials.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Montgomery County Sheriff shall ensure that the building remains secure and that notice of closure is posted on all entryways.

Should the state of emergency extend beyond the period indicated above or should the nature of the emergency otherwise require modification by the Court, the Court will make a determination of available alternative remedies for the conduct of court business, as necessary, and a corresponding Order will be entered and distributed in accordance with Georgia law.

A copy of this Order is being sent to the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, the Judges of the Oconee Judicial Circuit, the Clerks of the Superior Court of the Oconee Judicial Circuit, the clerks of the Georgia Court of Appeals and the Georgia Supreme Court. Notice of this order will also be provided to the local bar association and posted in writing in the various courthouses of the circuit.

SO ORDERED this 30 day of March, 2026.



Sarah F. Wall, Chief Judge
Oconee Judicial Circuit