

STATE COURT OF ROCKDALE COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

**STANDING ORDER FOR COURT PROCEDURES  
DURING JUDICIAL EMERGENCY**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH** the Second Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency entered on May 11, 2020, by the Hon. Harold D. Melton, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, the State Court of Rockdale County, Georgia, in consultation with the Georgia Department of Public Health, hereby adopts the following guidelines for in-court proceedings.

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of these guidelines is to provide for public access to judicial proceedings and a criminal defendant's rights to confrontation and open courtrooms, while making reasonable provision for the health and safety of all persons attending court or working in the Courthouse.
2. **Definitions.**
  - a. "Face mask" means a covering of the mouth and nose but not the rest of the face.
  - b. "Courthouse" means the Rockdale County Courthouse, 922 Court Street, Conyers, Georgia.
  - c. "Public area" means all parts of the Courthouse not reserved for staff.
3. **Directions for those who have, have been exposed to, or are especially vulnerable to, COVID-19.**
  - a. Persons who have been diagnosed with COVID-19; who have been exposed to COVID-19 within 14 days; or who are experiencing fever or cough, should NOT attempt to enter the Courthouse, but should call the telephone number provided with your court notice, or at the door, to speak with someone from the Court.
  - b. Persons with other health limitations which make them especially vulnerable to COVID-19 are invited to call the telephone number provided with your court notice, or at the door, to speak with someone from the Court.
4. **Admission to the Courthouse.** All persons entering the Courthouse **SHALL:**
  - a. Be screened for cough, fever and recent exposure to COVID-19.
  - b. Wear a face mask at all times while in the public areas of the Courthouse (provided at the door if needed).
  - c. Comply with directives of court and security personnel regarding appropriate distancing.
5. **Movement within the Courthouse.** Persons within the Courthouse, outside of courtrooms, **SHALL:**
  - a. Stay at least six feet from all other persons (except those with whom they are related or with whom they traveled to court), to the extent practicable, and
  - b. Not board elevators with other persons except those with whom they are related or with whom they traveled to court, and
  - c. Wear a face mask at all times while in the public areas of the Courthouse, and
  - d. Not congregate or loiter in the hallways in a way which obstructs other persons' access to elevators, offices or courtrooms, and
  - e. Comply with directives of court and security personnel regarding appropriate distancing.
6. **Admission to courtroom.** Persons entering State Court courtroom or waiting areas **SHALL:**

- a. Sit in one and only one designated area per room, and
  - b. When notified that a room is full, follow instructions for seating elsewhere, and
  - c. Wear a face mask at all times while in the courtroom or any conference room, and
  - d. Comply with directives of court and security personnel regarding appropriate distancing.
  - e. Due to the limited seating, persons with business before the Court are encouraged not to bring nonessential persons with them, especially children.
  - f. Anyone using a pen supplied by the Court must return it as directed for cleaning.
  - g. To allow for distanced seating, each person **SHALL** sit in a space marked with a tab. No one **SHALL** sit in a space not tabbed. Persons with cases on the calendar **SHALL** be given priority for seating in the courtroom.
  - h. Persons who have completed their business with the Court, or who simply want to observe court, are welcome to remain and attend, but may be required to sit in an overflow seating area so that persons with business with the Court can be seated in the active courtroom.
7. **Special court procedures.** Due to the ongoing judicial emergency, the Court is employing special procedures to minimize the risk to everyone's health. To this end, we are scheduling more court sessions, with fewer cases summoned per session; seating in the courtroom will be limited to designated seats, designed to require distancing; and distancing will be enforced in conferences with staff. Handling of paperwork will be kept to a minimum. Court personnel will sanitize areas of the courtroom between users.
8. **Contempt of court.** The procedures outlined in this Order are necessary for the safe, efficient operation of the Court. Persons failing to observe these procedures may be attached for contempt of Court.

**SO ORDERED**, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

  
NANCY N. BILLS, Chief Judge  
STATE COURT OF ROCKDALE COUNTY

  
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