

IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS OF THE  
SOUTH GEORGIA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

AMENDED ORDER ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING  
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS DURING STATEWIDE JUDICIAL  
EMERGENCY

Due to the continuing Statewide Judicial Emergency declared by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, until further order of the Court, it is Ordered and Adjudged that the following guidelines shall, effectively immediately, be utilized in the Superior Courts of the South Georgia Judicial Circuit comprising the counties of Baker, Calhoun, Decatur, Grady and Mitchell:

1. The public shall have the right of access to all judicial proceedings except as prohibited by law (such as adoption proceedings, for example) and all courtrooms shall remain open to the public.
2. All criminal defendants shall have the continued right to confrontation.
3. The Courts will continue to use technology to conduct remote proceedings where practical and appropriate.
4. Courtroom security staff shall ensure social distancing in courtroom public common areas, galleries of courtrooms, wells of the courtroom, hallways, elevators, restrooms, or other locations where the public might gather. All persons in the courtroom shall practice social distancing, which shall be enforced by courtroom security. The courtrooms shall be filled at no more than 33% capacity.
5. All spectators, attorneys, parties, witnesses, court personnel and courtroom security shall be required to wear an appropriate face mask before entering the courtroom.
6. Hand sanitizer dispensers should be available at various locations around the courthouse, including at the entry and exits from the courtrooms. Pens should not be shared between court participants.

7. No person who has Covid-19 or has had exposure to Covid-19 that is likely to result in infection shall enter any court facility within the South Georgia Judicial Circuit. All attorneys, parties, and witnesses with Covid-19, suspected Covid-19, or who has had exposure to Covid-19 likely to result in infection shall immediately notify the Clerk of Court where the action is pending.
8. All persons desiring to enter the courtroom shall practice social distancing while waiting to go through metal detectors. Individuals will be allowed to enter only through one door of the courtroom. All individuals will be subject to temperature checks prior to any court proceeding. Individuals feeling feverish or with measured temperatures equal to or great than 100°F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 will not be permitted in the courtroom. Inmates from jail facilities who may be transported to a courtroom will also be screened.
9. Sanitizing of the courtroom shall be routinely and regularly performed including both before and after all court proceedings. On hearing days, the courtroom shall be sanitized during the day.
10. Attorneys, parties, and witnesses over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised, such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy shall notify the Clerk and the Court shall consider excusing that person and/or granting a continuance.
11. All witness subpoenas in any case, civil or criminal, need to state that if the witness has Covid-19, has been running a fever, experiencing any of the COVID-19 symptoms, anyone in their home has been running a


fever, or if they have come into contact with a COVID-19 patient then they must notify the clerk immediately.

12. Anyone who works in a court facility within the South Georgia Judicial Circuit that has known or suspected Covid-19 and anyone with Covid-19 exposure likely to result in infection shall be isolated and/or quarantined in accordance with the DPH Seventh Amended Administration Order for Public Health Control Measures, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A.
13. 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.
14. All non-essential civil hearings may be held as scheduled by the assigned judge. All attorneys and parties in non-essential domestic civil cases shall conduct settlement negotiations prior to their court date. Unless otherwise authorized by the judge, all cases shall promptly commence at the time scheduled and conclude at the time scheduled.
15. All uncontested non-essential civil matters shall be presented to the presiding judge in chambers after any legally required time has passed. Any documents sent to the presiding judge before the legally required time has passed may be returned to the sender unsigned.


**IT IS ORDERED** that each Clerk of this Court shall provide notice of the issuance of this order to the public and to all local governments. Notice shall be provided by whatever means are reasonably calculated to reach the public and may, without limitation, include publication in the legal organ of the county and any other newspaper of local distribution, and other public gathering sites, transmittal by facsimile or e-mail, and announcements on television, radio, and public address systems. Further, each Clerk of this Court shall prominently post the

guidelines at all courthouse entrances and on their website. Each local government shall post these guidelines on their websites.

SO ORDERED this 20<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2020.



J. KEVIN CHASON  
Chief Judge of Superior Courts  
South Georgia Judicial Circuit



7/20/2020

HEATHER H. LANIER  
Judge of Superior Courts  
South Georgia Judicial Circuit

Prepared by the Court



**STATE OF GEORGIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
SEVENTH AMENDED<sup>1</sup> ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER  
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL MEASURES**

**WHEREAS**, on March 14, 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued Executive Order 03.14.20.01, declaring a Public Health State of Emergency in Georgia due to the impact of Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19); and

**WHEREAS**, on March 16, 2020, the Georgia General Assembly concurred with Executive Order 03.14.20.01 by joint resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Public Health State of Emergency has been extended through and including July 12, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) recommends that all states and territories implement aggressive measures to slow and contain transmission of COVID-19 in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the number of cases of COVID-19 in the state of Georgia continues to grow; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 presents a severe threat to public health in Georgia; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is a severe respiratory disease that is transmitted primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; and

**WHEREAS**, although the vast majority of Georgians are complying with public health recommendations and guidance for the isolation of persons with symptoms of COVID-19, I have received reliable reports that a small number of persons may be behaving in a way that contributes to the spread of this disease in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, I have determined that it is necessary and appropriate to require persons who:

- have received a positive lab-confirmed test for COVID-19, or
- are suspected to have COVID-19 based on symptoms recognized by the CDC,  
or
- have been in close contact with a person with known or suspected COVID-19

to isolate or quarantine themselves at home, in order to slow the spread of COVID-19, reduce the number of people who will become infected, and avoid unnecessary strain on Georgia’s healthcare system.

<sup>1</sup> This Fourth Amended Administrative Order amends and supersedes the prior Orders issued on March 21 and 23, April 3 and 15, May 5 and 12, and June 2, 2020.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in accordance with O.C.G.A. §§ 31-2A-4(4) and 31-12-4, Chapter 511-9-1 of the Rules of the Georgia Department of Public Health (“Department”), and Governor Kemp’s Executive Orders,

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** as follows:

Isolation

1. *Persons With Known COVID-19.* Upon notification by a healthcare provider, public health official, or clinical laboratory of a positive laboratory-confirmed test for COVID-19, the person testing positive for COVID-19 shall immediately isolate himself or herself at home or another location approved by the Department.
  2. *Persons With Suspected COVID-19.* Upon notification by a healthcare provider or public health official that COVID-19 infection is diagnosed or suspected based on symptoms, the person with suspected COVID-19 infection shall immediately isolate himself or herself at home or another location approved by the Department. As of the date of this Order, the CDC recognizes the following symptoms of COVID-19 infection: fever (a measured temperature over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or a feeling of feverishness), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.
  3. Each isolated person shall avoid unnecessary physical contact with any and all persons and shall comply fully with the Isolation Protocol attached to this Order, which may be updated from time to time based on CDC guidance.
  4. Each isolated person shall remain in isolation until such time as he or she no longer presents a risk of infection to the public, as determined by the Isolation Protocol then in effect. As of the date of this Administrative Order, the Isolation Protocol requires an isolated person to remain in isolation until either:
    - the person’s fever has been gone for at least seventy-two (72) hours, without taking fever-reducing medication, and
    - the person’s other symptoms have shown progressive improvement, and
    - at least ten (10) days have elapsed from the date symptoms began,
- or**
- for a person who was placed under home isolation due to a laboratory-confirmed positive test result, but who has

experienced no symptoms of COVID-19, until at least ten (10) days have elapsed since the date of the person's first positive diagnostic test.

5. Isolated persons should monitor their symptoms and seek prompt medical attention if worsening symptoms develop, as instructed in the Isolation Protocol. An exception to the requirement for isolation applies in the event of an emergency, such as a fire or natural disaster, or if the person's health condition worsens and he or she requires treatment in a healthcare facility.
6. Each isolated person shall cooperate with state and local public health personnel by answering questions as necessary to identify and locate those persons with whom the isolated person has been in close contact (within six (6) feet for fifteen (15) minutes or more) beginning two (2) days before symptoms began or, for isolated persons who have experienced no symptoms of COVID-19, beginning two (2) days before the test sample was obtained. If requested by public health personnel, the isolated person shall provide a list of the locations visited by the isolated person during the time frame that he or she may have been able to transmit the disease.

#### Quarantine

7. *Persons With COVID-19 Exposure Likely to Result in Infection.* Upon notification by a healthcare provider, public health official, or isolated person of exposure to COVID-19 based on close contact (within six (6) feet for fifteen (15) minutes or more) with a person who must be isolated as provided herein, the person so exposed shall immediately quarantine himself or herself at home or another location approved by the Department.
8. Each quarantined person shall remain at home or in the approved quarantine location for a period of fourteen (14) days from the person's last known exposure to COVID-19. An exception to the requirement for quarantine applies in the event of an emergency, such as a fire or natural disaster, or if the person requires treatment in a healthcare facility. Health care providers, emergency medical services workers, first responders, and other critical infrastructure workers may continue to work, in consultation with their workplace occupational health program and if necessary to ensure adequate staffing, so long as they are asymptomatic, don masks while on duty, and comply with all other quarantine requirements for the duration of the fourteen (14) day period.
9. During the period of quarantine, the quarantined person shall take his or her temperature twice per day and monitor any symptoms of respiratory illness. If at any time the quarantined person experiences symptoms of COVID-19, including cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever (a measured temperature

over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or a feeling of feverishness), chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell, the quarantined person shall be considered a person with suspected COVID-19 and shall follow the requirements for isolation set forth above.

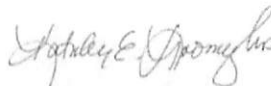
Staff members of the Department remain available at 866-PUB-HLTH (866-782-4584) to provide assistance and counseling to persons subject to this Administrative Order concerning their illness or exposure and their compliance with this Order. During the period of isolation or quarantine, the ability of persons subject to this Order to communicate with others outside the isolation or quarantine site, including their ability to exchange confidential communications with legal and medical advisors of their own choosing, will be preserved and facilitated to the extent possible without jeopardizing the integrity of the isolation or quarantine.

Failure to comply with this Order is a misdemeanor offense pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 31-5-8. If the Department has reasonable grounds to believe that a person subject to quarantine or isolation refuses to comply with the requirements of this Order, the Department may provide information to law enforcement as necessary to ensure compliance and facilitate criminal prosecution.

Further, any person who refuses to isolate or quarantine himself or herself as required by this Order may be subject to such further action as may be necessary to protect the public's health.

This Administrative Order shall remain in effect for thirty (30) days following the end of the Public Health State of Emergency declared in Executive Order 03.14.20.01 and as extended thereafter.

**SO ORDERED**, this 16th day of June, 2020.



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Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.  
Commissioner  
State Health Officer

Attachment:  
Georgia Department of Public Health Isolation Protocol