

**JUL 12 2022**

Annetta D. Stenbridge, Clerk  
Superior & State Court  
Douglas County, GA

## STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: FOURTH REVISED  
ORDER REGARDING COVID 19  
COURT PROCEDURES FOR  
THE DOUGLAS JUDICIAL  
CIRCUIT

This court has been monitoring the status of the Covid 19 pandemic on a daily basis, to balance the need for both public health and safety with the need for access to the courts. As of this writing, 1,016,293 persons have died of Covid 19 in our country. Several months ago, the Centers for Disease Control issued a Covid Data Tracker to inform the public regarding the status of the pandemic in each community of the United States. This tool informs both the public and decision makers of

community spread and measures that should be taken in response. The status of Covid 19 has moved to a High transmission rate in Douglas County in the past several days. Medical recommendations for public health include vaccinations, boosters, social distancing, quarantine if symptomatic or testing positive, and hand washing.

After consultation with the medical leadership of Cobb Douglas Public Health, the court will revise the Covid 19 operating procedures in public areas of the Douglas County Courthouse as follows, until further Order of this court:

1. There will be no requirement for temperature checks upon entry into the Courthouse, as the court is informed they do not operate as a reliable indicator of Covid 19 status. Instead, all persons who are positive for Covid 19 or symptomatic may not enter the Courthouse. These symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking, sore throat, headache, loss of taste, loss of sense of smell. This is NOT A CHANGE from the previous order.

2. Masks are required to be worn by all persons in public areas of the courthouse and there are no exceptions to this rule. The Sheriff's office is directed to refuse admittance to anyone who declines to wear a mask, and free masks will be provided while supplies last. Elected officials and department heads continue to have the discretion to require or not require masks within their immediate work space but there are no exceptions for the mask requirement in public areas of the courthouse. This is a CHANGE from the previous order, which made masks optional in the discretion of the public when Covid 19 transmission was at a LOW or MEDIUM rate.
3. Social distance requirements are increased from three feet to six feet in public areas of the courthouse and courtrooms. This means that jury trials will only take place in courtrooms that can accommodate this social distancing. This is a CHANGE from the previous order.
4. Judicial officers are encouraged to continue court proceedings by

videoconference whenever possible, but same is not required.

The court notes that the norm in this courthouse except for jury

trials has continued to be virtual court hearings whenever

possible. When in person proceedings occur, social distance of at

least 6 feet should be maintained. Parties may briefly remove

masks to address the court, parties, or jurors at their option.

The judges are not required to wear masks provided that a

plexiglass barrier is reinstalled at the judicial bench. This is a

CHANGE from the previous order.

5. Should the Covid 19 level for Douglas County change from

HIGH to MEDIUM status, the court will revise this order

accordingly.

This order is issued pursuant to the lawful directive of the Supreme

Court of Georgia regarding the authority of Chief Judges to establish

same, as well as OCGA Section 38-3-61 and 38-3-62. It shall become

effective on Monday, July 18, 2022. The court directs promulgation of

the Order to the Supreme Court, all local Judges and elected officials,

department heads and necessary staff.

*SO ORDERED* this July 12, 2022.



WILLIAM H MCCLAIN, Chief Judge  
Douglas Judicial Circuit

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