

IN THE 22ND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ALABAMA

May 15, 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER - #2020-5

22nd Judicial Circuit Procedures for In-Person Circuit,
District, Juvenile and Probate Court Hearings

Beginning immediately these general guidelines apply in all Circuit, District, Juvenile and Probate Courts in the 22nd Judicial Circuit of Alabama until the same are withdrawn and/or replaced. The Judges of the Courts listed above shall work within these guidelines in order to provide some uniformity of procedures for all persons involved with the business of the Court including, attorneys, parties, witnesses and court personnel.

While these are general guidelines for in-person court hearings, specific cases and/or dockets may mandate that the Judge presiding over the same alter or modify some aspects of these general guidelines to best facilitate certain cases or dockets. Each Judge has the authority to make reasonable alterations from time to time to any particular provisions of these guidelines provided such alterations are consistent with their overall purpose of resuming Court operations in a manner that promotes the safety of all involved.

GUIDELINES

1) Dockets which are normally set at one specific time of day for all cases appearing on that docket (ie 9:00 a.m) may be modified to set each case at a specific time during the day. It will be the responsibility of attorneys and parties to stay informed of any changes to previously scheduled Court times.

2) In all Courtroom cases:

a) Each attorney and party are prohibited from entering the Courthouse until immediately prior to the time designated for their proceeding to begin.

b) Attorneys representing persons who are not incarcerated are asked to do the following:

1) Communicate with their client and any of their witnesses, prior to entry into the Courthouse, to attempt to determine whether the client or any person that will be called to testify as a witness has been diagnosed with having the COVID-19 virus or has had any symptoms of the COVID-19 virus (ie fever, cough or breathing issues) within the past 24 hours or has been exposed to someone with such symptoms or has been exposed to

anyone that has been diagnosed as having the COVID-19 virus.

In the event that any of these are issues with a party or witness or with any attorney seeking entrance to the Courthouse, the attorney shall notify a Courthouse Security officer or the Court. The person in question shall not enter the Courthouse unless such entry is approved by the Judge after consultation with Court Security.

- c) Attorneys representing incarcerated defendants are asked to take the steps outlined in paragraph b above regarding themselves and any witnesses that the attorney plans to call to testify.

3) Courtroom admission:

- a) The only persons allowed entry into the Courthouse for Courtroom proceedings are:

- 1) Actual parties to an action.
- 2) Attorney(s) representing a party.
- 3) Witnesses testifying in a Court proceeding while actually testifying. All witnesses shall remain outside of the Courthouse until notified to come into the Courtroom to testify.
- 4) Court Personnel

4) All persons shall, while inside of the Covington County Courthouse and including inside of one of the Courtrooms:

- a) Remain six (6) feet from others who are not members of their household.
- b) All persons are encouraged to wear face coverings at all times unless instructed to remove the same by the Judge while speaking. The Judge presiding may, at his/her discretion, require all persons entering the Courtroom to wear face covering.
- c) Make frequent use of the hand sanitation supplies provided in the Courtrooms. Specifically, anyone entering a Courtroom SHALL use the hand sanitizer located at the entrance of the Courtroom.
- d) At the conclusion of a given proceeding all persons involved shall immediately exit the Courthouse. Linger in the Courthouse for discussion or otherwise is prohibited. Exceptions may be allowed for attorneys representing multiple clients whose cases follow the attorney's previous case(s).

Done and Ordered this 15th day of May, 2020.


CHARLES A. SHORT
PRESIDING CIRCUIT JUDGE