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STATE COURT
HENRY COUNTY, GA

STATE COURT OF HENRY COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

JUL 01 2021

FOR
LYNNE M. POLIGARO
CLERK OF STATE COURT, HENRY COUNTY, GA

STANDING ORDER FOR COURT PROCEDURES
DURING PANDEMIC

IN RECOGNITION OF the ongoing worldwide covid-19 pandemic, which continues to affect Henry County and the State of Georgia, the State Court of Henry County, Georgia, in consultation with the Georgia Department of Public Health, hereby adopts the following guidelines for in-court proceedings.

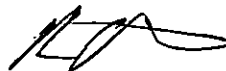
1. **Purpose.** The purpose of these guidelines is to provide for public access to judicial proceedings and a criminal defendant's rights to confrontation and open courtrooms while making reasonable provision for the health and safety of all persons attending court or working in the Judicial Center.
2. **Definitions.**
 - a. "DPH" means the Georgia Department of Public Health.
 - b. "Face mask" means a covering of the mouth and nose but not the rest of the face.
 - c. "Judicial Center" means the Henry County Judicial Center, 44 John Frank Ward Boulevard, McDonough, Georgia.
 - d. "Public area" means all parts of the Judicial Center 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, shall **NOT** attempt to enter the Judicial Center, but should call the telephone number provided with your court notice, or at the door, to speak with someone from the Court.
 - b. Persons who are immune-compromised or medically fragile, or living in a household with someone who is immune-compromised or medically fragile; or who are over age 65; or who have child care issues due to COVID-19; are invited to call the telephone number provided with your court notice, or at the door, to speak

- 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 courtrooms.** Persons entering State Court courtrooms 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 for that purpose. No person shall sit in a space not marked for seating. An adjoining courtroom shall also be available for overflow seating, where spectators may observe the proceedings by live audio-video stream. Persons with cases on the calendar shall be given priority for seating in the active courtroom.
 - h. Persons in the overflow seating areas shall maintain order and quiet so that everyone can see and hear the proceedings in the active courtroom.
 - i. 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 pandemic, the Court is employing special procedures to minimize the risk to everyone's health. To this end:
- a. 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.

- b. **To the extent practicable, and as allowed by law and the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Georgia, all proceedings will be conducted via teleconference and all participants are strongly encouraged to participate remotely rather than appearing in person.**
 - c. **All State Court proceedings shall be open to the public, by live attendance and/or by online live streaming. A link to view court by live streaming shall be posted on the court's webpage.**
 - d. Jury proceedings will continue to be governed by the protocols for jury trials previously adopted by the Court, on file with the Clerk and the Supreme Court of Georgia.
8. **Teleconference protocols.** Persons participating in court proceedings by teleconference shall take no actions which disrupt the proceedings. More specifically, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, participants shall observe the following instructions:
- a. Dress as if in court.
 - b. Sit at up-right chair at a table or desk.
 - c. No food or drinks allowed during session.
 - d. Be in a room or location where no one else can audibly or visually disrupt the proceedings.
 - e. Must participate via audio AND video.
 - f. Must be in a well-lit room or area and must always show face on screen. Do not leave the screen to run errands.
 - g. No hats or headcovers (unless for religious purposes).
 - h. Make sure device is fully charged so no interruption in participation.
 - i. No texting, talking to third parties, net surfing, emailing, or doing anything else during session that would be a distraction.
 - j. No lying down, lounging, driving or leaving the video screen.
 - k. No smoking or vaping.
 - l. No use of profanity.
9. **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 1st day of July, 2021.



BEN W. STUDDARD, Chief Judge
STATE COURT OF HENRY COUNTY