

IN THE 22<sup>ND</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ALABAMA

May 15, 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER - #2020-4

COPIES

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court issued an Administrative Order suspending all in-person hearings in all Courts of the State of Alabama.

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Chief Justice issued Administrative Order No. 7 which allows, subject to the approval of the Presiding Circuit Judge of each Circuit, the resumption of in-person hearings in the Circuit Courts, District Courts, Juvenile Courts, Probate Courts and Municipal Courts after May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Administrative Order No. 7 granted the authority to the Presiding Circuit Judge of each Judicial Circuit to extend the current suspension of in-person hearings to a later date not beyond August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Said order also authorized each presiding Circuit Judge to make decisions regarding the safety and welfare of all court personnel in all courts within the Circuit. Said grant of authority specifically charged the Presiding Circuit Judge to implement procedures that comply with the recommendations and requirements of the Governor's previously issued "Safer at Home Order" so as to protect court employees and other individuals accessing all courts within the Circuit.

Therefore, it is hereby Ordered as follows:

The provision of the Administrative Order of the Alabama Supreme Court issued on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, suspending all in-person hearings in all Courts is hereby extended for all Courts within the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit thru Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This extension includes, but is not limited to, all in-person hearings in all Courts of this Circuit including the Circuit Court, the District Court, the Juvenile Court, the Probate Court, and all Municipal Courts. The exceptions to such suspension for certain emergency proceedings set forth in the above referenced Supreme Court Order remain exceptions to this suspension.

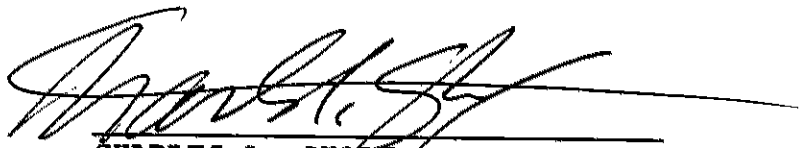
In addition to the exceptions to the suspension of in-person hearings listed in the Supreme Court's Administrative Order, the following is hereby designated as an additional exception within all Courts of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit of Alabama: Any Circuit, District, Juvenile, Probate or Municipal Judge may, at his/her discretion, conduct in-person hearings beginning Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in matters that do not fall within the listed emergency exceptions referred to above, provided that such matter is, in said Judge's opinion, one of considerable urgency that needs to be addressed forthwith. Such case must be one that is an individually scheduled case set for a specific time and not as a part of a mass docket with other cases. Such case must also be able to be conducted within the safety guidelines set forth by separate Administrative Order.

This exception does not allow for group docket settings of multiple cases that result in multiple participants involved in different cases being required to appear at the Courthouse/Courtroom at the same or near the same time. It is the intent of this exception to allow a Judge to attend to matters that have actual urgency due to safety or health reasons while at the same time preventing mass gatherings of persons as is the case when mass dockets are called.

Cases that are currently set for a hearing thru May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and beyond remain set as previously ordered unless continued by order of the Judge presiding over the same.

In compliance with Alabama Supreme Court's Administrative Order No. 7, this Court will, by separate Administrative Order, set forth procedures for conducting in-person hearings that are scheduled thru May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 pursuant to the listed exceptions and that occur following May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 when the general suspension outlined herein is scheduled to expire.

Done and Ordered this 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

  
CHARLES A. SHORT  
PRESIDING CIRCUIT JUDGE

IN THE 22<sup>ND</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ALABAMA

May 15, 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER - #2020-5

22<sup>nd</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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:

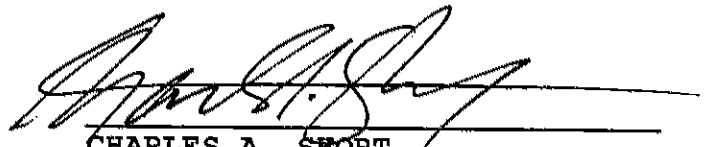
a) The only persons allowed entry into the Courthouse for Courtroom proceedings are:

- 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 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

  
CHARLES A. SHORT  
PRESIDING CIRCUIT JUDGE

IN THE 22<sup>ND</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ALABAMA

May 15, 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER - #2020-6

22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit Procedures for In-Person Municipal Court  
Hearings

Beginning immediately these general guidelines apply in all Municipal Courts in the 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 for all cases appearing on that docket may be modified to set each case at a specific individual time. 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 Courtroom 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 Courtroom, 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 Courtroom, the attorney shall notify a Court Security officer or the Court. The person in question shall not enter the Courtroom 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:

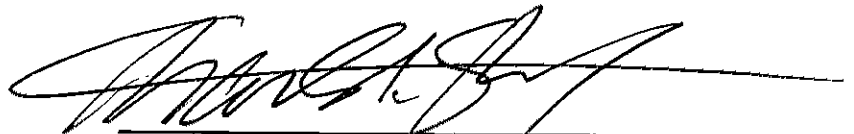
a) The only persons allowed entry into the Courtroom are:

- 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 Courtroom until notified to come into the Courtroom to testify,
- 4) Court Personnel.

4) All persons shall:

- 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 over a proceeding 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 Courtroom. Linger in the Courtroom 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 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.



CHARLES A. SHORT  
PRESIDING CIRCUIT JUDGE