

IN THE 27TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

STATE OF ALABAMA

MARSHALL COUNTY COURTROOM AND COURTHOUSE PROCEDURES TO RESUME IN-PERSON HEARINGS UPON OPENING OF MARSHALL COUNTY COURTHOUSES BY MARSHALL COUNTY COMMISSION


1. Any person (1) who resides with or has had close contact with someone who has traveled to a foreign country within the last fourteen (14) days; (2) who has been asked to self-quarantine by any hospital or health agency or any medical health professional; or (3) who has been diagnosed with, or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or their family; must IMMEDIATELY report such information to his or her attorney if the person has retained or been appointed an attorney and must IMMEDIATELY report the same to the Courthouse Security Officer if seeking entry into any Marshall County Courthouse. Such person(s) SHALL NOT be allowed entry into any Marshall County Courthouse without prior approval of the judge presiding over the case. If for whatever reason, such individual is allowed entry into any Marshall County Courthouse without first obtaining the approval of the judge presiding over the case, any such person must immediately report the same to a Bailiff or the Court upon entry into any courtroom.
2. All at-risk staff shall not return to his or her work station until instructed by the Court. Further, any staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 shall not report to work until after receiving documented medical clearance and submitting the same to his or her immediate supervisor.
3. All retained attorneys are requested to contact their clients the day before court or meet them outside the courthouse the morning of court to confirm with them that neither they, nor any witness has symptoms (fever, breathing issues, etc...) or has been exposed to someone with symptoms or are in a high risk group. In the event these issues exist, the attorney shall notify the Court and such individual shall not enter the courthouse. This practice is also encouraged among appointed counsel where practical.

4. Dockets may be set at intervals throughout the day (each docket may vary depending on the facilities and the nature of a docket), or matters set specially to reduce the number of individuals in the courthouse at any given time. Each individual judge shall be responsible for setting cases and dockets keeping in mind the type of docket, facilities, and number of parties and witnesses which may be called. Anyone arriving early for a hearing will not be admitted into the courtroom until that docket starts.
5. Courthouse security will screen individuals upon entry into the courthouse. Further, individuals seeking entry in the courtrooms or waiting to get in, may be screened by courtroom security or personnel and these procedures may vary for court to court depending on equipment and personnel available. Screening personnel upon entry into the courthouse and/or courtroom will assess any potential health concerns (symptomatic, exposure, etc.), priority of access, etc. Each individual judge may further limit access to the courtroom to only necessary parties and witnesses and/or allow access only when necessary or needed in the proceeding.
6. The total number of parties and attorneys in the courtroom will be determined by the seating capacity of each courtroom, allowing for a minimum of 6 feet of separation between everyone in the courtroom, this may have to be monitored by security/court staff at the door to the courtroom. Once capacity is reached, no one gets in until someone leaves. The Judges will actively attempt to maintain separation by limiting the size of dockets as the judge may see fit.
7. Signs have been and shall remain posted at each courthouse entrance directing anyone who has tested positive, has symptoms, or has likely been exposed, SHALL NOT enter the courthouse but, to immediately contact their attorney or if self-represented to contact their judge's office for further instructions.
8. In each courtroom there will be designated areas for parties and attorneys to stand that allow for their separation from each other and from court personnel. Use of signage and/or high visibility tape is encouraged where available. Attorneys are encouraged to have witnesses on standby. Witnesses may be on standby outside the courthouse in their vehicles or other places where they can maintain social distancing. Further, some courts may allow

witnesses to testify through virtual testimony where the capacity exists and the court approves the same prior to the court date.

9. Excess chairs shall be removed and those remaining will be spaced out to comply with social distancing. Benches are to be marked for seating separation.
10. Separation shall be required while in the courthouses and enforced by the court, however, the same does not apply to small children or anyone needing assistance. Anyone intentionally violating the separation order may be subject to the contempt powers of the court and at a minimum may be asked to leave the courthouse.
11. Courthouse security, court personnel and individuals within the courtroom or waiting areas are encouraged to wear PPEs for their protection and those around them. If required by the County Commission, people entering any Marshall County Courthouse may be required to wear such PPEs.
12. Courthouse Security and/or courtroom personnel will make regular rounds to ensure compliance with separation.
13. This list does not contain all procedures for all courts and some courts may have additional procedures. This list is meant to give some general guidance to the attorneys and the parties during this unique time.

DONE and ENTERED this 11th day of **MAY, 2020**.



PRESIDING CIRCUIT JUDGE

