



**IN THE THIRTY-EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
JACKSON COUNTY, ALABAMA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

**Resumption of In-Person Hearings Authorized Effective May 18, 2020, and  
Continued Suspension of Jury Trials until September 14, 2020**

WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Alabama has extended until further order, the state of emergency for the Judicial Branch of the State of Alabama pending further order;

WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Alabama has issued an Administrative Order Extending Orders and Deadlines Concerning the Suspension of In-Person Proceedings and continued suspension of jury trials until September 14, 2020; and

WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Alabama has authorized the resumption of in-person hearings after May 15, 2020, subject to the approval of the Presiding Circuit Judge of each circuit and has granted authority to the Presiding Circuit Judge to make decisions regarding the safety and welfare of all court personnel in all courts within the circuit;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority conferred upon me, as Presiding Judge of the Thirty-Eighth Judicial Circuit, Jackson County, Alabama, by the Supreme Court of Alabama in its Administrative Order No. 7, dated May 13, 2020,

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED:**

1. Jury trials shall remain suspended until September 14, 2020.
2. The court hereby approves the resumption of in-person hearings in the circuit courts, district court, juvenile courts, municipal courts, and probate courts of the Thirty-Eighth Judicial Circuit effective May 18, 2020. The judges within the circuit shall individually determine when it is appropriate to conduct such in-person hearings on a case by case basis.

3. To protect courthouse employees and other individuals accessing the courts, any permitted in-person proceedings shall be limited to attorneys, parties, witnesses, security officers, members of the press, and other necessary persons, as determined by the trial judge. This restriction shall remain in place until the Supreme Court of Alabama determines that a state of emergency for the Judicial Branch of the State of Alabama no longer exists.
4. Witnesses shall be placed on standby and shall remain out of the courthouse and courtrooms until the court is ready for them at which time they will be contacted by the attorney or by the *pro se* party.
5. With courtroom time at a premium due to space limitations, in cases where each party is represented by an attorney, the attorneys are expected to conduct settlement negotiations in advance of in-person hearings.
6. No person shall enter the courthouse or individual courtrooms who has been diagnosed with, or has had contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or has been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital, or health agency.
7. All persons entering the courthouse and individual courtrooms shall maintain a minimum of 6 feet of separation between such persons (except for those persons who share the same household).
8. Hand sanitizers and Personal Protective Equipment will be provided in the courtrooms, as available.
9. The courts of the Thirty-Eighth Judicial Circuit shall continue to utilize available technologies such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing to conduct hearings when it is practical and feasible to do so. So long as core constitutional functions and rights are protected, all judges are urged to limit in-person courtroom contact as much as possible by utilizing available technologies, including electronic filing, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing, as authorized by the Supreme Court of Alabama.

10. The Clerk shall provide the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts with a copy of this order, and a copy shall also be provided to members of the Jackson County Bench and Bar, Alabama State Bar Association, Chairman of the Jackson County Commission, and the Jackson County Sheriff.

DONE this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer C. Holt", written over a horizontal line.

JENNIFER C. HOLT  
Presiding Circuit Judge