

**PRESIDING JUDGE'S ORDER
SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF ALABAMA**

FILED

FEB 16 2021

STATE OF ALABAMA)
COUNTY OF ETOWAH)

CASSANDRA "SAM" JOHNSON
CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER LIFTING SUSPENSION
OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL JURY TRIALS**

WHEREAS, the undersigned Presiding Judge for the 16th Judicial Circuit further considering the current state of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic in Etowah County and the State of Alabama, including recent information received from the weekly Gadsden/Etowah County EMA teleconference providing updated information on the pandemic, it is

ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED as follows:

I. Civil and Criminal Jury Trials:

The **February 22, 2021 criminal jury trial week will proceed as scheduled** consistent with this Circuit's January 15, 2021 Presiding Judge's Administrative Order.

All other civil jury trial weeks, criminal felony plea weeks, and criminal felony and misdemeanor jury trial weeks thereafter shall proceed as scheduled throughout the balance of the 2021 year consistent with the Spring Term 2021 Court Calendar and Fall Term 2021 Court Calendar, unless otherwise ordered prior to the beginning of the scheduled plea week or jury trial week (civil, criminal or municipal/district court appeals).

II. Grand Jury Sessions:

All Grand Jury Weeks beginning the week of March 1, 2021 and for the balance of the 2021 year shall proceed as scheduled consistent with this Circuit's Spring Term 2021 Court Calendar and Fall Term 2021 Court Calendar, unless otherwise ordered prior to the beginning of the scheduled Grand Jury Week.

III. Non-Jury Dockets & Specially Set Non-Jury Proceedings:

All judges when scheduling and setting non-jury dockets and non-jury specially set hearings / trials shall set same to allow for appropriate spacing or in the alternative, are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to implement video conferencing through the secure AlaCourt Virtual Hearing ("Zoom") Application and must

exhaust all efforts to implement virtual hearings prior to scheduling an in-person hearing.

The undersigned Presiding Judge acknowledges there are certain exceptions to virtual hearings, which include Traffic Dockets and Juvenile Court 72-hour hearings, etc. District / Juvenile Judges shall continue to implement the same safe practices with these proceedings to ensure six foot (6') social distancing is implemented.

IV. Masks:

Masks shall continue to be **MANDATORY** for all individuals, court personnel or otherwise, while conducting business at the Judicial Building, with the understanding that employees within the Judicial Building may remove their masks while working at their designated work station. Parties, witnesses and attorneys may remove their masks at the direction of the Judge while testifying and/or presenting oral argument in the proceeding.

DONE and ORDERED this 16th day of February, 2021.

/s/ WILLIAM B. OGLETREE
PRESIDING JUDGE
16TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Cc: Hon. Tom Parker, Chief Justice
Dr. Rich Hobson, Director Administrative Office of Courts
Hon. Steve Marshall, Attorney General
16th Judicial Circuit Judges (Circuit and District)
Hon. Cassandra Johnson, Circuit Clerk
Hon. Jody Willoughby, District Attorney
Hon. Jonathan Horton, Sheriff
16th Judicial Circuit – Juvenile Referee / Child Support
Etowah County Bar Association
Etowah County Probation Office
Etowah County Community Corrections
Etowah County Court Referral
Municipal Court Judges & Staff

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