

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS OF THE SOUTHERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA**

COVID-19 NOTICE

Due to the ongoing health crisis caused by COVID -19, the Supreme Court of Georgia entered its ORDER DECLARING STATEWIDE JUDICIAL EMERGENCY on March 14(Amended), and to clarify the impact of this judicial emergency to the local community, the judges of the Southern Judicial Circuit provide the following guidelines. Changes to these guidelines may be implemented as future circumstances require.

The following matters may be heard with the listed procedural guidelines:

1. **ADOPTION:** Parties and attorney only; no family, no minors and no spectators.
2. **CHILD CUSTODY ACTIONS INCLUDING DIVORCE AND MODIFICATION:** Verified pleadings and with any supporting affidavit(s) must be submitted to the presiding judge for review and approval for setting in chambers or conference call. No minors or witnesses are permitted.
3. **DIVORCE/NISI/TEMPORARY HEARING:** These matters will generally not be heard; however, verified pleadings and supporting affidavit(s) may be submitted to the presiding judge for consideration of emergency relief and possible scheduling.
4. **FINAL UNCONTESTED DIVORCE DECREE:** Attorneys may submit affidavit(s), final decree and statutorily required documents to judge's chambers for review and entry of order. Currently scheduled decrees will follow this procedure.
5. **EX PARTE DOMESTIC HEARINGS:** Attorney may submit verified pleadings, affidavit(s) and order to the presiding judge for consideration of emergency relief and scheduling. Only the attorney and party are permitted to appear in chambers.
6. **PROTECTIVE ORDERS:** The Haven or other statutorily authorized agency may submit pleading and order to a judge for consideration and scheduling.
7. **BONDS:** The Clerk will continue to prepare a bond calendar and the court will consider each matter in chambers at the jail conference room with attorneys and officers only. The presiding judge will schedule any required evidentiary hearing as needed.
8. **GUILTY PLEAS:** Guilty pleas will be taken from calendars of blocks of (10) cases or less. Calendars will be scheduled at 9:30am , 11:00am and 2:00pm. Only essential personnel are permitted. Family and spectators are strongly advised not to attend.
9. **PROBATION REVOCATION PETITIONS:** No technical petitions will be heard. Waiver should be used as appropriate. The Clerk/District Attorney will prepare the calendar and the court will conduct hearings at the jail courtroom. Family and spectators are strongly advised not to attend.

10. LOWNDES AND COLQUITT COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURT: Court will be held in the normal course, but special instructions will be given to team members and participants as circumstances require.
11. GENERAL CIVIL/MOTIONS TO COMPEL/MOTIONS FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT will not be heard unless prior approval by the presiding judge. Attorneys should submit the hearing request with cover letter concerning the matter under consideration.
12. CIVIL CALENDAR CALL will not be held.
Civil jury trials are temporarily suspended.
13. CRIMINAL CALENDAR call will not be held.
Criminal jury trials are temporarily suspended.
14. HABEAS CORPUS ACTIONS will not be held, absent special setting by the presiding judge.
15. MOTIONS FOR NEW TRIAL will not be held, absent special setting by presiding judge.

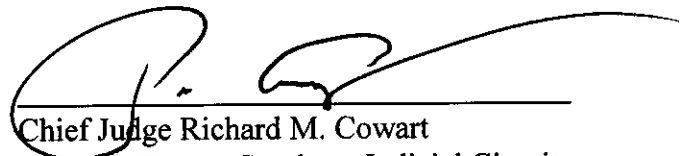
Please see the following resources for further information.

Supreme Court of Georgia
<https://www.gasupreme.us/>

Southern Judicial Circuit
www.southernjudicialcircuit.com

Judicial Council of Georgia
<https://georgiacourts.gov>

Notice so ordered, this 17th day of March, 2019.



Chief Judge Richard M. Cowart
Superior Courts, Southern Judicial Circuit

All Judges concur:
James E. Hardy
James G. Tunison, Jr.
Brian A. McDaniel
James L. Prine