

Gwinnett County Magistrate Court

COVID-19 Update (July-August)

The Gwinnett County Magistrate Court takes public health and safety seriously. Therefore, pursuant to the Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency* issued by the Supreme Court of Georgia and the Chief Judge of the Gwinnett County Superior Court (copies of both of these Orders are posted on the main page of the Clerk of Court website), we will be implementing the following changes until further notice:



*The Chief Justice's Fourth Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency presently extends through August 12, 2020.

General Safety Protocols:

Please review the Gwinnett Judicial Circuit's Guidelines for In-Person Judicial Proceedings posted on the home page of www.gwinnettcourts.com.

Everyone is strongly encouraged to use face masks while in the building. **However, a mask or face covering is now required for anyone entering a courtroom in which matters are being heard before the Court unless otherwise directed by the Court.**

Civil Filings:

Due to the Clerk of Court's COVID-19 protocols, the Clerk is only accepting criminal filings in person. Therefore, any new Magistrate Court filings must be submitted to the Clerk's Office through the ***e-filing portal or by regular mail***.

A number of our forms are available on the website at www.gwinnettcourts.com, under the Magistrate Court tab.

For additional help with forms, please use the Magistrate Court Forms Generator. You can access this tool by clicking on the "Forms Generator" link located in the left column under the Magistrate Court tab of www.gwinnettcourts.com. Or, you can cut and paste the attached link: <https://georgia.tylerhost.net/SRL/>. This Forms Generator asks you a series of questions that will help you create the form you need.

If you need a specific form that you do not see or have a general question, please contact us at 770.822.8081.

Garnishments:

The most recent Statewide Order Extending Judicial Emergency does not toll or extend case deadlines. Therefore, Magistrate Court is again accepting new garnishment filings and claim forms through the e-filing portal or by mail.

Dispossessory Trials:

Pending Cases: Dispossessory trials will resume August 5, 2020, for those cases that were already set down for trial as of the date of the first Order Declaring Judicial Emergency (March 13, 2020). Magistrate Court will be calling in a smaller number of cases per calendar, using more courtrooms and implementing social distancing protocols. However, calendar notices also include instructions about how to request a video hearing.

Trial notices will be mailed. If you have a question about a trial date, please call 770.822.8088.

Newly Filed: For any dispossessory action filed during the period of the judicial emergency, notices for court dates will be mailed once the Courts can be safely reopened for general business.

Civil Trials:

Civil trials resumed the week of June 22. Magistrate Court is utilizing smaller calendars, more courtrooms, and implementing social distancing protocols. Civil trial notices also include instructions about how to request a video hearing.

Trial notices will be mailed. If you have a question about a trial date, please call 770.822.8088.

Virtual Mediation: Magistrate Court, through the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution, is offering virtual mediation sessions through Zoom at no cost to litigants in Magistrate Court civil cases that qualify and *where both parties agree to mediate*.

Please contact Kim Jenkins at 770.822.8081 if you are interested in scheduling a virtual mediation session.

Civilian Warrant Applications and Warrant Application Hearings:

During this period of judicial emergency, Magistrate Court will not be accepting any new criminal warrant applications made by non-law enforcement personnel. All previously scheduled warrant application hearings are continued until further notice. Instead, please direct any reports of a crime or requests for criminal warrants to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Criminal Matters:

The Magistrate Court continues to provide all essential functions within its jurisdiction, as defined by the Emergency Orders of this Circuit and the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, including the issuance of Temporary Protective Orders (by designation).

Magistrate Court conducts bond reviews and holds First Appearance Hearings every morning, seven days a week, at 8:30 a.m. The Magistrate Court and Solicitor's Office have instituted a system whereby bond reviews are conducted by the Solicitor's Office at the time of the First Appearance Hearing.

Magistrate Court continues to assist the State Court by hearing in-custody misdemeanor cases at the Jail Court Annex.

Magistrate Court has instituted a system to provide the D.A.'s Office with warrant paperwork at the time of the First Appearance Hearing, so as to facilitate felony bond reviews during the period of judicial emergency. Magistrate Court is currently holding preliminary hearings by video conference.

If you have any general questions, please contact us at 770.822.8081.

Thank you and please be safe.

Kristina Hammer Blum

Chief Magistrate