

## **FOR DEFENDANTS ATTENDING STATE COURT CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS**

**NOTICE:** If you have received a summons to Court, please carefully review your notice to check the location and time for the hearing. Failure to attend could result in a bench warrant (arrest.) Please carefully check your notice for information.

**LEGAL REPRESENTATION:** If you are already represented by an attorney, contact your attorney once you receive the notice and follow any instructions given to you by the attorney. Please stay in touch with your attorney and alert your attorney if there are any issues about your attendance. If you are not represented by an attorney and you plan to hire one later, please attend the court proceeding and let the Judge know that you are in the process of hiring counsel.

**COURT APPOINTED LAWYERS:** Defendants who cannot afford a lawyer are entitled under the Constitution to have counsel appointed to represent them. At your Court proceeding, you can tell the Judge that you cannot afford a lawyer; you will be required to fill out an application and discuss your situation with the Judge. Forms for court-appointed attorneys are available at [www.gwinnettcourts.com](http://www.gwinnettcourts.com).

**LOCATION:** Most state court criminal matters are heard in courtrooms on the second floor of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Building (GJAC.) Digital signs are posted as you enter the second floor area telling you where each judge is sitting, and all courtrooms are numbered and lettered for identification.

If you are lost, seek assistance at the second floor desk located by the elevators. You may also call the office of the Judge who is handling your case for directions.

**LATE ARRIVAL:** If you are running late, please contact the office of the Solicitor or the Judge who is handling your case and let them know of transportation or other problems.

**ILLNESS:** If you are ill, please contact the office of the Judge who is handling your case and let them know about your illness. PLEASE DO NOT COME TO COURT IF YOU RUNNING A FEVER, COUGHING, SNEEZING, OR IF YOU FEEL SICK. You may be given a later court date to accommodate your illness.

**CONTINUANCE:** If you are seeking a continuance for other reasons, please contact the office of the Solicitor and/or the office of the Judge who is handling your case and explain the reason. Continuances are granted or denied by the Judge on a case-by-case basis.

**ATTENDANCE:** Please do not bring non-essential attendees to court whenever possible. Courtrooms are using social distancing to promote safety of all those in attendance, and space could be limited at times.

**FORM:** If you are requesting a court-appointed attorney, please, if possible, download the form from [www.gwinnettcourts.com](http://www.gwinnettcourts.com) and have it filled out BEFORE you get to court. This will save time and promote safety. Be aware that additional forms and paperwork may be provided in your court proceeding. Please bring your own pen to use for your in-court paperwork.

**REMOTE HEARINGS:** You may be provided with an opportunity to have your case heard remotely. The State Courts are now hearing cases using Zoom and other remote videoconferencing platforms.

- **SAFETY ISSUES:**

- PLEASE OBSERVE ALL SAFETY PROTOCOLS WHEN ENTERING THE BUILDING.
- PLEASE WEAR A MASK WHENEVER POSSIBLE.
- PLEASE OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCING.
- PLEASE USE THE HAND SANITIZER STATIONS LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING.
- PLEASE WASH YOUR HANDS WHEN NECESSARY.
- AND PLEASE AVOID HANDLING AND TOUCHING SHARED ITEMS UNNECESSARILY.

Additional information can be found [www.gwinnettcourts.com](http://www.gwinnettcourts.com). This website contains information about how to reach the Solicitor's Office and other Court personnel, including official phone and email addresses.