



**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF ST. CLAIR COUNTY, ALABAMA  
PELL CITY DIVISION**

MINUTE BOOK,  
Plaintiff,

V.

Defendant.

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Case No.: CV-2020-999999.00

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Pursuant to Administrative Order No. 7 released today from the Alabama Supreme Court, effective Monday, May 18, 2020, in-person hearings shall be allowed with the following procedures to be implemented for those proceedings in the Thirtieth Judicial Circuit:

1. All parties shall maintain 6-foot social distancing from others in the courtroom.
2. If available, hand sanitizer should be used.
3. When possible, courts are encouraged to continue to utilize virtual hearings.
4. Masks are encouraged.
5. When necessary, staggered dockets shall be implemented.
6. Only parties, attorneys or members of the press shall be allowed in the courtroom.

**DONE this 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.**

/s/ PHIL K SEAY  
St. Clair County Circuit Court Judge, Presiding

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF ALABAMA**  
**IN RE: COVID - 19 PANDEMIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE**  
**MAY 13, 2020**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 7:**  
**RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON HEARINGS AUTHORIZED AFTER MAY 15,**  
**2020, AND CONTINUED SUSPENSION OF JURY TRIALS UNTIL**  
**SEPTEMBER 14, 2020**

On May 8, 2020, Governor Kay Ivey announced the amendment of the "Safer at Home Order," effective May 11, 2020.

This Court hereby extends the state of emergency for the Judicial Branch of the State of Alabama pending further order. All administrative orders issued by this Court in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, except for Administrative Order No. 3 pertaining to briefing and filing deadlines, are hereby extended and shall remain in effect, except as set forth below.

Subject to the approval of the Presiding Circuit Judge of each circuit and subject to the provisions of this order, in-person hearings in the circuit courts, district courts, juvenile courts, municipal courts, and probate courts are authorized to recommence after May 15, 2020.

For the purposes of determining whether to recommence in-person court hearings, the Presiding Circuit Judge is granted authority to make decisions regarding the safety and welfare of all court personnel in all courts within the circuit. The Presiding Circuit Judge is specifically authorized to adopt procedures that, in his or her discretion, will implement the recommendations and requirements of the "Safer at Home Order" so as to protect court employees and other individuals accessing all courts within the circuit. In making such determinations and before adopting any order or procedures, the Presiding Circuit Judge should consult with other judges in the circuit, the Chairman of the County Commission(s), the Circuit Clerk(s), the Sheriff(s), the District Attorney, and the Public Defender in counties or circuits having a full-time public defender.

Presiding Circuit Judges are authorized to extend the restriction of in-person court proceedings in any court beyond May 15, 2020, provided that a written order is entered and forwarded to the Chief Justice and provided that the order does not extend beyond August 15, 2020.

Jury trials shall remain suspended until September 14, 2020.

Parker, C.J., and Bolin, Shaw, Wise, Bryan, Sellers, Mendheim, Stewart, and Mitchell, JJ., concur.

Witness my hand and seal this the 13th day of May, 2020.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Jordan Weller". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Julia Jordan Weller  
Clerk of Court  
Supreme Court of Alabama

**IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF ARGO, ALABAMA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-003**

**COURT'S GUIDELINES TO RE-OPENING IN COURT PROCEEDINGS**

**Whereas, the Supreme Court of Alabama, has now called for the opening of in-court proceedings in the State pursuant to guidelines provided by the Court and the Administrative Office of Courts of this State; and**

**Whereas, this Court has held conference with the Mayor of this City, the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief, the Clerk of the Court, the City Prosecutor, and the City Public Defender, and having discussions and receiving information from each person so present as requested; and**

**Whereas, this Court has reviewed and considered guidelines for Re-Opening Municipal Courts issued by the Administrative Office of Courts; and**

**Whereas, this Court has reviewed and considered guidelines for safeguarding all businesses as issued by the Alabama Department of Public Health; and**

**Whereas, this Court has studied and reviewed Governor Ivey's Safe at Home Order and Amended Safe at Home Order; and**

**Whereas, this Court is ever so mindful of the dangers associated with COVID-19 and likewise, the Court is ever so mindful of the dangers associated with failing to administer timely justice to all persons coming before this Court; and**

Now pursuant to Administrative Order No. 7 from the Supreme Court of Alabama dated May 13, 2020 regarding COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Response that now directs all Municipal Courts to again open in-court proceedings in the Municipal Courts of this State, and in accordance with the Guidelines provided by the Administrative Office of Courts and the Supreme Court, this Court enters the following Administrative Order providing this Court's Guidelines for in-court proceedings effective after May 15, 2020:

**OFFICE PROCEDURES**

1. All employees shall return to their normal duties taking appropriate actions to safeguard themselves from all illnesses;

2. Any employee who is feeling ill shall stay at home and promptly report your illness to his/her Supervisor.

3. Any employee shall stay at home who is exposed to COVID-19 (for instance, if someone at home is infected) or if diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Any missed pay shall be covered as the City's policies and procedures currently exist.

4. Employees may wear protective masks at their discretion.

5. Employees shall practice safe social distancing ( 6-foot distance) hereinafter defined as "safe distancing" from others.

6. Employees shall increase safe hygiene practices such as washing hands frequently, avoid touching the face, and practice good etiquette when coughing or sneezing.

7. Abide by all guidelines as established by the City.

8. Employees shall use their safe discretion in the interaction with the public and other employees of the City.

9. Any employee reporting to work shall self-screen and report any known symptom of COVID-19 to their Supervisor, including:

a. If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

b. If you are experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or a sore throat.

- c. If you have had a fever in the last 48 hours.
- d. If you have experienced new loss of taste or smell.
- e. If you have experienced vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.

If you experience any of these symptoms, you may be asked by your Supervisor to leave the premises and seek medical testing and care for COVID-19.

- 10. The employees shall regularly sanitize and disinfect often touched surfaces.
- 11. When interacting with prisoners in jail, the employee shall keep a socially safe distance from the prisoner.

### **COURTROOM SET-UP**

12. All in courtroom seating for persons appearing before the Court shall be spaced at least 6 feet apart (with maximum seating capacity of 30).

13. All courtroom personnel will have designated areas to allow for “safe distancing” interaction with all persons appearing in Court.

14. Demarcation lines shall be placed where necessary to provide for safe distancing.

15. Appropriate notices shall be placed where necessary as a guide for safe practices.

16. A separate entrance and exit will be designated and visibly marked.

17. The Courtroom, lobby, and restrooms shall be properly sanitized before and after each docket (a docket being considered a full day of Court).

18. Hand sanitizer shall be readily available for all persons utilizing the Courtroom, including police officers providing Courtroom security, Court clerks, Judge, Prosecutor, Public Defender, AND Court support personnel.

19. The City shall provide appropriate plexiglass paneling, with an opening to receive and provide defendants with documentation, for the Court Clerks. The plexiglass shall be secured to provide the Court Clerk from having direct contact with the defendant.

20. Persons appearing before the Court may wear masks but may be asked to remove them for identification purposes by the Court.

21. Persons authorized to be in the Courtroom are the defendants, a parent of a child under 18 years of age, a victim whose case is called with the defendant, attorneys, police officers, court referral officers, victim advocates.

22. Tables or a hand rail will be placed before the Judge to provide at least six feet of distance between the Judge and the defendant. The defendant shall stand at least 6 feet from the Judge while addressing his/her case.

23. The Prosecutor and Public Defender will be provided separate rooms to conduct business where safe distancing will be required.

## **IN COURT PROCEDURES**

24. If a person is attempting to enter the Courtroom with gloves on, they shall be required to remove the gloves and either use hand sanitizer or receive a new pair of

gloves to replace the ones discarded. Note – gloves can transmit the virus just as easily as hands. The best practice is to use hand sanitizer before entry and after exiting, never touching your face.

25. The Courtroom shall have two clerks in the courtroom at all times, one assisting the Judge and the other receipting payment from defendants.

26. Persons desiring to pay who do not have a case set shall be allowed to do so provided they practice social distancing.

27. Sign in sheets shall be made available by the Clerks of the Court 30 minutes prior to Court on a form approved by the Court. The Police officer working Courtroom security and/or Clerk of Court shall be responsible for the sign in sheets. The docket sign in will be designed to accommodate defendants on a “first come first serve” basis, absent a good cause (for example wheelchair bound defendants or victims). The time sheet will be set up in time block format to accommodate the safe seating capacity. Defendants and persons appearing in Court will be given an assigned time to appear in Court from the sign in sheet. Time blocks for cases will be - 28 defendants for every 60 minutes. The defendants will be required to return to their vehicle and wait for their time slot, they will not be allowed to congregate at any time and must maintain safe distancing. The Court will see defendants in the assigned time block until all are seen, then the next time block will be called into the Courtroom.



28. Persons not on the scheduled court docket will not be added to the docket and will be instructed to call the Magistrate during business hours to be placed on a docket.

29. Any defendant desiring to surrender or have a warrant recalled, must contact the magistrate and be placed on the docket, no exceptions.

30. Persons who have business before the Court will only be allowed into the Courtroom when their case is called. No visitors, no family, no friends, no children, a parent or guardian will be required to appear on traffic cases where the defendant is under 18 years of age.

31. An attorney appearing for a defendant may be allowed to sign in his/her client for a time slot, provided the defendant will be present when the case is called. An attorney can not enter the Courtroom until his/her client appears with counsel. Any attorney who is appearing without his client due to appropriate waivers may enter at any time provided all appropriate safe distancing is followed. The Prosecutor and/or Public Defender may allow an attorney or defendant to enter at any time, so long as the attorney is meeting with the Prosecutor or the Public Defender is meeting with his defendant, provided however, the Courtroom capacity as set out hereinabove is not violated.

32. Masks may be worn but are not required.

33. The City shall take the temperature of all persons entering the Courtroom or Courthouse, and any person whose temperature exceeds 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be denied access to the Courthouse and rescheduled by the Clerk of the Court.

34. Defendants will be required to remain in the Courtroom seating until their case is called before the Court. Loitering and standing in the Courtroom, hallways or restrooms will not be allowed.

35. Defendants appearing in Court will be directed to pay fines and costs in the Courtroom. Walk in payments, or those people appearing at the Courthouse to pay without being on the docket will be allowed to enter the Courthouse with the approval of the Police officer working Courtroom security and appear in the Clerk's Window in their offices.

36. Until the Governor or the State of Alabama Health Department declares the State to be in Phase III, any vulnerable individual may have their case continued or postponed until a later date at which time Phase III will be in effect. "Vulnerable Individuals" are considered to be elderly individuals (over 60 years of age) and/or individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.

37. Persons needing to use the restroom before their case is called will be allowed into the Courthouse, provided the Police Officer providing security allows it. The person entering the Courthouse for the purpose of a restroom break shall practice safe distancing and will return to their vehicle until their time slot is called.

38. A copy of this Order shall be transmitted to the Newspaper publication for the County for publication, a copy placed in public locations in the Courthouse, and placed on the Court's or City's website.

39. This Order shall remain in effect until further Orders of the Court.

DONE AND ORDERED, THIS THE 13<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2020.

/s/ Carl E. Chamblee, Jr. \_\_\_\_\_  
Carl E. Chamblee, Jr.  
Municipal Judge \_\_\_\_\_