

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CRISP COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

CRISP COUNTY PLAN FOR RESUMING JURY TRIALS

WHEREAS, the Crisp County Committee for Resuming Jury Trials met on September 30, 2020, with the following members present: Chief Superior Court Judge Robert W. Chasteen, Jr., Superior Court Judge Denise Fachini, District Attorney Brad Rigby, Chief Public Defender Tracy Mullis, Sheriff and EMS Director William Hancock, Deputy Alex Busch, Assistant District Attorneys Christian Brown, Lauren Fletcher, and Roncheros Fortune, Attorney David Rainwater, Maintenance Supervisor Toby Coleman, Court Administrator Amy Bryant, and Ruth Garcia and Maranda Holliday with the Crisp County Clerk's Office.


WHEREAS, the Crisp County Committee for Resuming Jury Trials has adopted the following Crisp County Plan for Resuming Jury Trials, hereinafter referred to as "Plan":

1. The Cordele Judicial Circuit's COVID-19 Court Operating Guidelines (dated 9-30-20) were developed in compliance with the Judicial COVID-19 Task Force Report, the Georgia Court Reopening Guide, and other public health and safety guidelines and includes sanitization procedures, face-covering requirements, and social distancing protocols. The Cordele Judicial Circuit COVID-19 Court Operating Guidelines are published on the Eighth Judicial District's website, the Judicial Council/AOC website, and on the doors to the circuit's courthouses. The guidelines are attached as an exhibit to this Plan and incorporated herein as "Exhibit A."
2. Along with their juror summons, jurors will receive a letter describing protective measures taken in the Crisp County Courthouse for their health and safety. The letter is attached to this Plan and incorporated herein as "Exhibit B." Upon receipt of a summons, a juror will call the Clerk's office to answer questions regarding his or her possible exposure to COVID-19.
3. Jurors will arrive at a hand sanitizing station and wash their hands prior to entry into the courthouse. Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing stations will be available throughout the building for use by jurors, trial participants, and members of the public, including, but not limited to the front entrance, all restrooms, the jury deliberation rooms, the courtrooms, and the jury assembly room. Sanitizer will be available on counsel's tables in the courtroom. Sanitizer will be available at the lectern and the witness stand.
4. Jurors will be screened upon arrival and before entry into the courthouse. Their temperatures will be taken with a contactless thermometer. Anyone with a temperature over 100.4° will not be admitted into the building. Prospective jurors will answer questions on a screening form. Anyone who answers in the affirmative to having COVID-19 or known exposure to COVID-19 pursuant to the screening form will not be admitted. The Crisp County Sheriff's Office will provide to the Crisp County Clerk's Office a list of people who were not admitted due to possible exposure to COVID-19.
5. All persons entering the building will wear masks or face coverings. Masks or other face coverings must be worn in the courthouse at all times except when directed by the Court for case-specific reasons or by security personnel. If a person does not have a mask, one will be provided to him or her.
6. Sheriff and EMS Director Billy Hancock has marked all common areas inside the courthouse with blue tape to show where people should stand or sit to observe social distancing guidelines

and maintain a distance of 6 feet. All seating in the jury assembly room and courtrooms has been marked.

7. Jurors will be summoned in small groups to allow for social distancing. The arrival times will be staggered to ensure that social distancing requirements are maintained.
8. After the screening is completed, jurors will be seated in the jury assembly room. Courtrooms A and 2 will be available if additional seating is required.
9. Jury selection will be conducted in Courtroom 1. Seating is limited to comply with social distancing requirements; thus, additional chairs will be moved to the jury box area so that the jurors can sit 6 feet apart. No more than 14 jurors will be questioned at a time. After the jury is seated, the jurors will be instructed to sit in the same chair for the duration of the trial.
10. Both jury rooms and Courtroom 2 will be used during breaks so that the jurors can remain socially distanced. Jury deliberation will be conducted in either the jury assembly room or Courtroom 2 to allow for social distancing.
11. During the trial, if there is inadequate seating in the courtroom, any members of the public will be seated in the jury assembly room where a live feed of the proceedings will be broadcast. Courtroom seating will be prioritized for the defendant's immediate family members and victims and their immediate family members. Counsel for the State and the defendant will be responsible for informing the Court and the bailiffs of the number of seats needed for victims and family members of victims and the defendant.
12. During the trial, witnesses will sit behind a plexiglass barrier.
13. Trial exhibits will be published to the jury using digital monitors whenever possible. Digital exhibits will be used where feasible to reduce the handling of paper or physical evidence in the courtroom. If jurors need to touch or handle any trial exhibits in the courtroom or during deliberations, disposable gloves and hand sanitizer will be provided.
14. All courtrooms, the jury assembly room, witness rooms, juror deliberation rooms, common areas, and restrooms will be sanitized daily. The witness stand and microphone will be cleaned after each use. The microphone on the lectern will be cleaned after each use.
15. Air filters will be replaced regularly, and there is a system in place to keep the ductwork and HVAC system clean and sanitized.
16. The office of the presiding judge will alert stakeholders when courthouse personnel or any visitors to the courthouse have tested positive for COVID-19.

SO ORDERED, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2020.

  
ROBERT W. CHASTEEN, JR., CHIEF JUDGE  
SUPERIOR COURTS  
CORDELE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS FOR THE CORDELE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
STATE OF GEORGIA

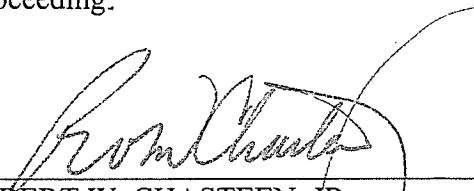
**COVID-19 COURT OPERATING GUIDELINES (dated 9-30-20)**

Due to the ongoing public health state of emergency declared by the Governor and a Statewide Judicial Emergency declared by the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, the Superior Courts of the Cordele Judicial Circuit will conduct in-person hearings, grand jury proceedings, and jury trials subject to the following guidelines.

1. Each person entering the courthouse or a court facility will be required to wear a mask or face covering and to go through a screening process which will include taking the person's temperature. Anyone with a temperature over 100 degrees will not be admitted to the courthouse. Each person entering the courthouse will be requested to use hand soap and/or hand sanitizer which will be available.
2. Persons falling into one of the following categories shall be denied admittance into any courthouse in the Cordele Judicial Circuit without obtaining an exception from the Chief Judge:
  - a. Anyone entering the courthouse who is experiencing a fever, any shortness of breath, persistent cough or sore throat, or any other symptoms of respiratory infection or who has experienced such symptoms and is subject to Georgia Department of Public Health Isolation Protocol will not be admitted to the courthouse.
  - b. Anyone who has been asked to self-quarantine by any healthcare provider or who lives with someone who has been asked to self-quarantine.
  - c. Anyone who has been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 or has had contact with anyone who has been so diagnosed within the last 14 days will not be admitted.
3. Any person not admitted to courthouse for the foregoing reasons will be given a telephone number or other form of communication to contact court officials regarding all alternative means of pursuing critical judicial matters.
4. Each person admitted to the courthouse will be required to observe social distancing, which includes remaining 6 feet away from anyone else while in the courthouse, entering the courthouse, or exiting the courthouse.

5. All courthouse employees and members of the public are required to wear a mask or face covering when entering the courthouse. The wearing of a mask in the courthouse is required after entry into the court facility except when someone is speaking in courtroom proceedings.
6. Any person working in a court facility with known or suspected COVID-19 shall be required to isolate himself or herself at home or another location approved by the Georgia Department of Public Health. Any person COVID-19 exposure likely to result in infection shall be required to quarantine himself or herself at home or another location approved by the Georgia Department of Public Health.
7. There will be designated places marked with a blue X where each person is allowed to sit while in the courtroom and which will allow social distancing of at least six (6) feet. Social distancing shall be required by all who enter the courthouse including attorneys, parties, witnesses, spectators, jurors and court officials. Social distancing requirements will be strictly enforced.
8. The Court will stagger its proceedings to minimize the number of people in the courthouse at any particular time. All Court proceedings are open to the public; we ask that those attending be limited to only those who are interested in the proceedings going forward at that time.
9. The courtroom and all public areas will be sanitized before and after each session.
10. Any person who meets the criteria for being medically fragile or being at a higher risk of severe illness will be excused from any court proceeding.

This 30 day of September, 2020.

  
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ROBERT W. CHASTEEN, JR.  
CHIEF JUDGE, SUPERIOR COURTS  
CORDELE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

# Tara Hayslip

CLERK OF SUPERIOR & JUVENILE COURTS  
CRISP COUNTY, GEORGIA

Phone (229) 271-4726  
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You are receiving this Memorandum because you have been summoned to serve as a juror in Crisp County Superior Court beginning on **Monday, November 16, 2020**. The purpose of this Memo is to explain the operating procedures and public health guidelines in place to protect you and the other members of the traverse jury.

On March 14, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Honorable Harold D. Melton, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, issued an Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency pursuant to O.C.G.A. §38-3-61. That Order has been extended seven times, and each Order has prohibited both grand jury proceedings and jury trials. Chief Justice Melton has now issued an Order dated October 10, 2020 which allows the resumption of jury trials if they are conducted in accordance with public health guidelines. We have used public health guidelines to implement policies and procedures for conducting all jury proceedings, as in-person proceedings can be conducted so long as we adhere to public health guidelines and our operating procedures. The COVID-19 Court Operating Guidelines can be found on our website at ([www.eighthdistrict.org](http://www.eighthdistrict.org)) and are posted at the entrances to each courthouse.

For your protection and the protection of the public, **everyone entering the courthouse is required to wear a mask**. The mask shall be worn during any proceedings unless the person is speaking. In addition, every person entering the courthouse will be screened prior to entry, which includes (1) having your temperature taken with a contactless thermometer, and (2) answering questions about your possible exposure to the Coronavirus. Every person entering the courthouse will be required to use hand sanitizer. **We ask that you arrive at the Courthouse by 8 AM to allow for sufficient time for checking in and COVID screening.**

The COVID-19 Court Operating Guidelines require that we strictly enforce social distancing. The seating in the courtrooms and in public areas will be limited and marked to comply with social distancing requirements. In addition, courtrooms and public areas will be sanitized before and after each court proceeding. The guidelines for safely opening the courthouse for in-person proceedings have been implemented for several months and have allowed us to safely complete in-person proceedings in the courthouse. There have been no problems to date, and we anticipate being able to safely resume traverse jury proceedings.

**It is vitally important that you call the Clerk of Crisp Superior Court's office at 229-271-4725 upon receipt of this Jury Summons.** You will be asked a series of Juror Qualifying questions. This allows us to have a sufficient number of jurors while also implementing social distancing measures and avoiding a crowd. We thank you in advance for your jury service and your cooperation in helping us complete our jury proceedings.