



# Georgia State-wide Business Court

## Guidelines for In-Person Proceedings

Revised July 7, 2021

The Georgia State-wide Business Court (the “Court”) is committed to providing the just, speedy, and economical disposition of cases while ensuring the safety of all participants. The following Guidelines for In-Person Proceedings (“Guidelines”) were established to ensure the safety of all who attend in-person proceedings before the Court.

### **I. Public Access to the Nathan Deal Judicial Center**

The following safety protocols have been established for visitors entering the Nathan Deal Judicial Center (“NDJC”).

- *Face Masks.* Pursuant to CDC guidelines, fully vaccinated visitors to the Nathan Deal Judicial Center are not required to wear a mask. Unvaccinated visitors (individuals who have not completed a vaccination series) must wear a mask covering the mouth and nose while in the building, including the courtroom, and when interacting with others. Any person who enters the building without a mask is certifying that he or she is fully vaccinated.
- *Temperature assessment.* The Georgia Building Authority (“GBA”) has placed infrared temperature screening scanners at the public entrance point. State Troopers will deny entry into the NDJC to individuals whose temperature exceeds 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
- *Sanitizing public areas.* The Courtroom and conference rooms will be sanitized before and after each proceeding.
- *Social distancing.* Visitors must maintain social distancing requirements of at least six (6) feet at all times. Visitors must also follow posted signage limiting the number of people in an elevator.



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- *Air Quality.* The NDJC has a state of the art HVAC system, including an air purification system which uses UV light to reduce mold, bacteria, fungi and associated toxins that can enter the air stream.
- *Entrance prohibited to anyone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.* Any person who enters the building is certifying that he or she is free of COVID-19 symptoms and known exposure that poses a significant threat of infection.

## II. Conference Space

- The Court will make available conference spaces to provide litigants and their lawyers the ability to meet privately to continue preparations for hearings and trial.
- Conference spaces will be disinfected before and after use, and hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be located in each conference space.

## III. In-Person Oral Argument and Other Proceedings

- Starting in May 2021, the Court will begin conducting oral arguments and other proceedings in person on a case-by-case basis.
- Once the Court resumes regular in-person hearings, it will consider requests for remote hearings upon joint request of the parties.
- Attorneys arguing before the Court are asked to sit at the far ends of the counsel tables to maintain a maximum distance from each other. A maximum of two (2) individuals may sit at each counsel table.



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- The Court will implement document control measures, as appropriate for each case and proceeding, to limit the physical exchange of documents during in-person proceedings. Such measures may include the use of pre-prepared notebooks for the Court, counsel, and witnesses, or the exclusive use of digital documents during proceedings. The Court will confer with counsel and the parties in advance to ensure measures appropriate for each proceeding are implemented.
- The Courtroom gallery accommodates socially-distanced seating for eight (8) people. Co-counsel, parties, interested persons, and media representatives who attend hearings and other Court proceedings will be expected to follow COVID-19 guidelines, in addition to other guidance provided by the Court.
- The Court's health and safety protocols will be reassessed after each proceeding, and updates to such protocols will be reflected in these Guidelines and on the Court's website.

#### IV. Physical Preparations

- All physical spaces in the NDJC are cleaned nightly, including the disinfecting and sanitization of all physical surfaces.
- Signage is displayed throughout the building informing occupants of social distancing requirements, limitations on the capacity of elevators, and the maximum capacity of other spaces.
- No-touch hand sanitizer stations are provided in public spaces throughout the NDJC.



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- Disposable face masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes are available to any attendee of proceedings before the Court and are located in the vestibule outside the Courtroom on the Third Floor.