



Georgia State-wide Business Court

Guidelines for In-Person Proceedings

Revised January 10, 2022

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.* Visitors must wear a face mask covering the nose and mouth (i) when entering the NDJC, (ii) in all common areas, and (iii) in any other space where indicated by signs; provided, however, that in the Courtroom, counsel may elect to remove his/her mask while speaking from counsel table or the lectern. Appropriate masks are N95 or KN95 masks or a disposable surgical mask covered by a cloth mask.
- *Sanitizing public areas.* The Courtroom and conference rooms will be sanitized before and after each proceeding. Additionally, the GBA will fog (sanitize) public areas in the NDJC on a regular basis and as needed.
- *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.* Anyone experiencing the following symptoms, or who is currently subject to the Georgia Department of Public Health's (GDPH) Isolation Protocol, may not enter the NDJC: fever; chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; diarrhea; nausea; or vomiting. Please visit the websites for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>) or GDPH (<https://dph.georgia.gov/>) for additional information regarding COVID-19 symptoms.

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.



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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.
- While Judge Walter W. Davis is fully vaccinated, he will nonetheless wear a mask until seated on the bench. All other persons in the Courtroom will be expected to wear masks. Counsel, however, may elect to remove his/her mask while speaking from counsel table or the lectern.
- 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.
- 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.



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- 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.
- 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.