

AMENDED on August 28, 2020

FILED

To: Members of the 18th Judicial District

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From: Honorable Teresa Vincent, Chief District Court Judge

GUILFORD CO., C.S.C.

BY SA

Chief Justice Cheri Beasley entered an order implementing measures designed to curb the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the risk of exposure caused by crowded sessions of court. Consistent with the Chief Justice's order, effective Monday, March 16, 2020, several superior court, and district court proceedings of the 18th Judicial District will be rescheduled for **October 1, 2020, at the earliest, with several exceptions, which appear on the following pages.**

The emergency directive of the Chief Justice does not apply to proceedings in which a jury has already been empaneled and, it does not prohibit a judge or other judicial officer from exercising in chambers or *ex parte* jurisdiction conferred by law upon that judge or judicial officer, as provided by law.

The Clerk's Office will remain open from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm for the public, unless otherwise notified. However, unless you are required to appear in-person to conduct your business, attorneys and the public are strongly encouraged to use email and telephone to communicate with staff of the Eighteenth Judicial District. The Office of the District Attorney and the Public Defender offices are also open to the public. **All individuals that visit either of the above-referenced offices are required to wear face mask or coverings.**

Online court services are available for handling some court business, including citation services, paying your ticket, court payments, signing up for court date notifications and reminders, e-Filing court documents for certain courts and case types, and more.

CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT

- Involuntary Commitments will be conducted as needed, subject to necessary precautions, including, but not limited to, video testimony.
- Guardianship Hearings will be conducted as needed, subject to necessary health precautions, as determined by the Clerk of Court.
- Estate Administration matters will be conducted. However, person to person interactions will be limited if health concerns arise, as determined by the Clerk of Court.
- Special Proceedings matters will be conducted. However, person to person interactions will be limited if health concerns arise, as determined by the Clerk of Court.

MAGISTRATE AND SMALL CLAIMS

- The Greensboro and High Point magistrate offices will operate as normal for Warrants for Arrest, Magistrate's Orders, Criminal Summons, Initial Appearances, Cash Bonds/Property Bonds, Involuntary Commitment Orders, Juvenile Petitions and Secured and Non-Secured Custody Orders. **Courtroom 1B (Administrative Court in GSO) and Waiver Court in High Point (Rm. 162) shall reopen on October 12, 2020. However, the court will limit dockets to 100 cases per day. Small Claims cases will continue to be heard and may be heard remotely. However, the calendars shall be limited to twenty-five (25) cases per session of court. Weddings shall be by appointment and officiated on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 to 2:00 pm.**
- All District Court arbitrators, attorney(s), or litigant(s) may request a remote hearing instead of an in-person arbitration. Please contact Doretta Sims in the Judges' Chambers with any questions at (336) 412-7800.
- All court personnel, litigants, and attorneys are required to wear a face mask or face covering. The county is providing face masks at the courthouse entrance for persons in need of one.

District Court

- The office hours for Judges' Chambers are from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Judges will be available to consider *Ex-Parte* Emergency Custody request(s) and other matters, if appropriate, that may be addressed *ex parte*, such as a Motion to Recall an Order for Arrest 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- All court personnel, litigants, and attorneys are required to wear a face mask or face covering. The county is providing face masks at the courthouse entrance for persons in need of one.

Civil Domestic Violence Court

- **Courtrooms 2A (Note: GSO- Due to the high volume of caes in courtoom 2B and the inability to control calendaring, cases in courtrooms 2B have been moved to 2A and vice-versa in order to allow for social distancing.) and 3A (High Point) will operate as usual, handling domestic violence *ex-parte* matters and return hearings, unless otherwise notified. Domestic Violence Court shall continue to operate under regular business hours.**

Civil/Domestic District Courts

- Courtrooms 2B & 3A (Hpt) – Courts will operate as indicated in the following provisions. Emergency custody hearings will also be held in courtrooms 2B & 3A (Hpt). (Note: GSO- Due to the high volume of cases in courtroom 2B and the inability to control calendaring, cases in courtrooms 2B have been moved to 2A and vice-versa in order to allow for social distancing.) Request for ex-parte emergency custody orders may be handled remotely or in person. Please contact Stephanie Wallace or Pat Dixon (Trial Court Coordinators) to request remote hearings.
Courtrooms 2E and 3A (in GSO & Hpt) will remain open per COVID19 protocol. The courts shall continue to hear Pro-se and Magistrate appeals cases per the COVID19 protocol. However, the court shall limit the cases for social distancing purposes.
- There will be remote monthly calendars calls for courtrooms 2E and 3A (GSO & Hpt), until otherwise notified.
- The court shall conduct daily docket calls in a virtual courtroom at 9:00 am Monday through Friday unless courts are closed. The court shall email virtual courtroom links to attorneys. Pro Se litigants may also receive a virtual courtroom link upon request. Please contact Stephanie Wallace or Pat Dixon if you need assistance.
- To support the Clerk of Superior Court's staggered schedules, courts shall recess no later than at 1:00 pm each day. However, the court shall resume normal hours in civil courtrooms 2E and 3A in Greensboro, NC and in 3A in High Point on Tuesdays and Thursday beginning on September 8, 2020; and regular hours (9:00 am to 5:00 pm) Monday thru Friday on Monday, September 14, 2020. In Courtroom 3A (High Point), court shall be open on Mondays in the afternoon, if necessary until September 14, 2020, when the court shall resume regular hours from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Special Settings – Please contact the Trial Court Coordinator (Mrs. Stephanie Wallace or Pat Dixon) to reschedule.
- Please contact Stephanie Wallace or Pat Dixon if you have any questions.

Divorces

- The Court shall continue to hear divorces on Mondays at 2:00 pm. The Court shall limit divorces to twenty-five (25) cases per calendar. The court requests that attorneys drop off summary judgments by 4:00 pm the Friday before the court date.

Child Support Court

- This Court shall be open with limitations on the number of cases set; and shall restrict the number of litigants allowed in the courtroom. (See COVID19 Protocol for Child Support Court). **To support the Clerk of Superior Court's staggered schedules, the court shall recess at 1:00 pm each day.**

Criminal/Traffic District Court

- **The Court shall resume normal operating hours on September 8, 2020.**
- **The Court shall resume trials on September 8, 2020. The Court shall limit trials to two per day.**
- The DA shall calendar felony court cases in 1C on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The ADA will limit the number of cases on the calendar to allow for social distancing. Therefore, an Assistant District Attorney may contact attorneys in advance of the courtroom regarding continuances for newer cases to manage the number of defendants on a docket. Court shall begin at 9:00 am. However, the court may request defendants and/or attorneys to report back to court later to allow for social distancing. There will be no more than one hundred (100) cases scheduled in each courtroom. (See COVID 19 Protocol for Criminal Courts for additional information). **To support the Clerk of Superior Court's staggered schedules, the court shall recess at 1:00 pm each day until September 8, 2020. Beginning on September 8, 2020, court shall resume regular operating hours (8:30 am to 5:00 pm) Monday thru Friday.**
- Traffic court shall operate as usual except that trials will be limited to two trials per day until otherwise notified. The Court will ensure that limited numbers of defendants are seated in courtrooms to achieve social distancing. (See COVID 19 Protocol for Traffic Courts for additional information). Attorneys requesting Non-Driving While Impaired hearings shall calendar such cases for the Remote Traffic Calendar (except for triple-digit speeds and DWLR Impaired Revocations). If attorneys schedule non-traffic cases not related to DWI cases in a traffic courtroom, the Court will remove or continue the cases. **To support the Clerk of Superior Court's staggered schedules, the court shall recess at 1:00 pm each day until September 8, 2020. Beginning on September 8, 2020, court shall resume regular operating hours (8:30 am to 5:00 pm) Monday thru Friday.**
- Remote Traffic Court (for attorneys) shall be held (unless otherwise notified) on Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 11:00 am and on Thursdays in High Point from 9:00 to 11:00 am. (See COVID19 Protocol for Traffic Courts and Remote Hearings).

- Remote Traffic Court (for self-represented defendants) shall begin on Wednesday, August 19, 2020, and shall be heard on each Wednesday from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm for cases filed in Greensboro, NC; and on Thursdays for cases filed in High Point, NC, unless otherwise notified. Self-represented defendants may obtain a remote hearing request form from the Clerk of Superior Court or at www.nccourts.org. The form shall be submitted to the clerk's office in Greensboro via email at Guilford.GB.CriminalDistrict@nccourts.org and High Point at Guilford.HP.CriminalDistrict@nccourts.org.
- Courtroom 2C felony court cases will be heard in 1C on Tuesdays and Thursdays unless otherwise notified. (See Section on 1C for additional information) Domestic First Appearances shall continue to be heard with First Appearances on Mondays at 2:00 pm unless otherwise notified. The court shall continue to hear First Appearances/Bond Motions shall at 2:00 pm each day (unless otherwise notified).
- Courtroom 3D (Hpt) is open for First Appearances/Bond Motions at 2:00 pm each day (unless otherwise notified).
- Assistant District Attorneys will NOT call calendars but will process defendants and attorneys cases upon arrival. This practice will continue until otherwise notified.

Arraignment/Waiver Court (Courtrooms 1B – GSO and 3B- Hpt.)

- Courtroom 1B (Administrative Court in GSO) and Courtroom 3B (Administrative Court in Hpt.) shall reopen on October 12, 2020. However, the court will limit dockets to one hundred (100) cases for each session of court.

Juvenile Abuse Neglect & Dependency Court/Delinquency Court

- Courtrooms are open only for all matters per the COVID19 protocol. The Court shall hear cases remotely when it is feasible to do so. To support the Clerk of Superior Court's staggered schedules, in DHHS court, the court shall recess no later than 1:00 pm each day except on Wednesdays (in GSO) and Thursdays (in Hpt.) beginning September 28, 2020, when court shall have regular operating hours (9:00 am to 5:00 pm). Beginning on November 2, 2020, court shall resume normal operating hours Monday thru Friday (9:00 am to 5:00 pm). Please see the DHHS COVID-19 Protocol for additional information.

Specialty Courts

- Specialty Courts (Adult DTC, Mental Health Court, and Juvenile DTC) will operate under the current schedule. However, in some instances, only non-compliant participants may be

ordered to appear in person for court sessions. Courts session also may be held remotely when it is feasible to do so.

Mediation Program

- Mediators shall conduct orientation sessions online.
- They shall also conduct mediations remotely.
- The Mediation offices will be open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Judicial Waivers/Hospitalizations

- The court shall conduct hearings on a regular schedule.

Minor Settlement Conferences

- Minor settlements will be heard every other Wednesday in courtroom 2A at 2:00 pm in Greensboro and courtroom 3A in High Point, NC, by appointment. However, the court is requesting that attorneys conduct these hearings remotely. Please contact Stephanie Wallace in Greensboro or Pat Dixon in High Point (Trial Court Coordinators) to schedule a settlement conference.

Superior Court

We will run courts on June 1, assuming that is the official start date. Jury trials will not begin until November 2, 2020, at the earliest.

Criminal Court

- Until September 8, 2020, court sessions will continue to consist of nonjury matters, including Administrative hearings, guilty pleas, bond motions, and other motions.
- Probation Violation calendars will remain on their scheduled weeks.
- Calendars will be done daily to control the number of people who come to the courtrooms
- After receiving AOC approval in advance, jury trials may be held in locations other than the courthouses in order to adequately maintain social distancing

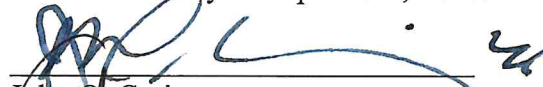
Civil Court

- There will not be any trials for the first month
- We will focus on the backlog of motions

- Some weeks we will run two civil courts
- Calendars will be done daily in order to control the number of people who come to the courtrooms
- The presiding judge shall have the sole discretion to hold remote hearings via WebEx, Zoom, or some other appropriate videoconferencing program, to be set up by the attorneys or parties
- **All civil motions shall be heard remotely via WebEx beginning September 8, 2020.**

For Civil Court matters, please contact Brittany Robinson in Greensboro or Wendy Stuart in High Point.

This the 2nd day of September, 2020.



John C. Craig
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge



Teresa H. Vincent
Chief District Court Judge, 18th Judicial District

***Provisions in red denote changes since the entry of the previous order.**