

Dunwoody Municipal Court

4800 Ashford Dunwoody Rd.
Dunwoody, GA 30338
678-382-6973/fax 678-396-4717

Hugh Powell
Chief Judge

Norlaundra Huntington
Court Clerk

DUNWOODY MUNICIPAL COURT COVID-19 PANDEMIC POLICY AND PROCEDURES

(Effective June 15, 2020)

PURPOSE

The City of Dunwoody Municipal Court is open to the public as of June 16th, 2020. For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to operate in a manner consistent with the guidance, and stay of abreast of new recommended practices, issued by the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) and the Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH). These policies and procedures are adhered to as much as possible to the standards of the Georgia Court Reopening guide.

To accomplish this objective, these COVID-19 pandemic policy and procedures detail the specific steps the Court is taking to safeguard the staff and the public's health and wellbeing, while ensuring the Court maintains its daily operations and services. In addition, this document provides guidance on how the Court will respond to defendants with new varying challenges produced by the pandemic.

SECTION I: EXTENDED COURT CALENDARS, NEW COURT NOTICES AND COVID-19 POLICY AND PROCEDURES INFORMATION MAILED TO DEFENDANTS

Extended Court Calendars. Additional court sessions and court times have been added to maintain the recommended six feet (6 ft.) safe distancing among defendants, the public, and court staff as defendants and others enter and complete his/her business in the building.

- Court will be held each Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm or 2:00 pm.
- Defendants will enter the court in organized groups of 22 individuals at a time, others will be asked to wait in their car and called when it is time to enter the courtroom.
- All defendants with pending cases will receive a reset notice mailed to the address on his/her citation, unless an updated address was provided to Court staff. The reset notice contains the date and time of the scheduled court date.
- *Reset notices.* This same required list of procedures is included in the Court Reset Notice and also applies to any individual wishing to enter the court:

- A face mask is REQUIRED to be worn at all times while inside the courtroom (except for a child under two years of age). Refusal to wear a mask, or removal of the mask at a later time, will deny entrance to, or result in removal from, the courtroom.
- Markings have been placed inside the building at six-foot (6 ft.) intervals, as recommended by the CDC, to ensure a safe distance between individuals.
- Upon entering the courtroom, your temperature will be checked using a no-touch thermometer. If you have a fever of 100.4°F or higher, you will not be allowed in the courtroom, and you will proceed to the Clerks to have your case rescheduled.
- If you have been exposed to Covid-19, are the caretaker of an individual with Covid-19, have experienced Covid-19 related symptoms, or you, or a member of your household, have tested positive for Covid-19 within 14 days prior to your court date, please contact the Clerk *in advance* to have your case rescheduled.
- Only the defendant listed on the citation will be allowed to enter the courtroom (and attorney, if applicable). To accommodate social distancing, space is limited, therefore, friends, family members, or children may not enter the courtroom. If you feel the need to have someone with you, that person must wait in his/her vehicle, and can be contacted by phone when your case is called.
- Defendants under 21 years of age may have been instructed by the court to be accompanied by parents/guardians. At this time, only one (1) parent/guardian may be present as instructed by the court.
- If you have childcare issues, contact the court to have your case rescheduled.
- In order to maintain as safe an environment as possible, the City of Dunwoody cleaning staff will thoroughly sanitize the courtroom in between each court session, and hand sanitizer stations will be provided throughout the building for your use.

SECTION II. PROCEDURES AT COURT HOUSE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER EACH COURT SESSION

Concerted effort. During this difficult time we ask everyone to do their part to keep the court running on time.

- Each defendant needs to arrive at the time listed on his/her notice. If a defendant arrives early, he/she will wait in his/her vehicle until his/her scheduled time, or there is

no one else in line if the defendant utilized public transportation, he/she will maintain at least 6 ft. distance from others while waiting inside or outside the building).

- If a defendant arrives after his/her scheduled time, he/she will wait outside the building until a court officer calls for late-comers.
- Prior to entering the courtroom, the following questions will be asked:
 - Have you, or anyone in your household, tested positive for Covid-19 within the last 14 days?
 - Have you, or anyone in your household, had a sore throat, cough, chills, body aches for unknown reasons, shortness of breath for unknown reasons, loss of smell or taste, or a fever of or greater than 100.4° F within the last 14 days?
 - To the best of your knowledge, have you, or anyone in your household, been in close proximity to someone with Covid-19 within the last 14 days?
 - Have you traveled outside of the country or been on a cruise ship within the last 14 days?

Any individual answering yes to any question above, or is unsure of the answer to any question above, will be asked to leave the building, and he/she will be given a court contact slip for communication with the court at a later time.

Any individual entering the courtroom during our scheduled court dates will have his/her temperature checked, prior to passing through the metal detector, using a no-touch thermometer. If an individual has a temperature of, or higher than, 100.4° F, he/she will be denied entry into the building, and he/she will be given a court contact slip for communication with the court at a later time.

- Any individual entering the courtroom will be required to wear a face mask. Anyone refusing to wear a face mask will be denied entry into the courtroom.
- Inside the building, the floor will be marked by tape; in the lobby, hallways, and at the pay window.
- The number of defendants in the courtroom is limited to maintain at least 6 ft. distance between one another.
- All seating in the courtroom will be arranged so that there is at least 6 ft. of separation between each seat.
- In order to maintain safe distancing, individuals attending court will be called by name and directed by staff for each step of the process once they enter the courtroom until his/her appearance in court is complete.

- Signs will be posted throughout the building reminding everyone to maintain a safe distance from each other and to sanitize his/her hands. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the building.
- After each court calendar, the courtroom will be thoroughly sanitized by the cleaning staff.

SECTION III. PROCEDURES AT COURT HOUSE ON NON-CALENDAR SESSIONS DAYS

- When court is not in session the Municipal Court will be closed to the public on Mondays and Fridays. On those two days, clerks will answer emails and phone calls remotely.
- To minimize in-person contact, individuals are encouraged to make requests for dispositions by e-mail (dunwoody.courts@dunwoodyga.gov). Open Records Requests can be made via our open records request portal, (https://www.dunwoodyga.gov/index.php?section=government_open_records)
- Defendants are can pay his/her fine(s) online, if applicable, at (<https://www.municipalonlinepayments.com/dunwoodyga>).
- Court procedures will be posted in front window, in lobby, and on the City's website.

If anyone has any questions, or if anyone wishes to have his/her case rescheduled based on one of the conditions above, please contact the court at (678) 382-6973, Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm. (Note that due to limited staff, someone may not always be available to answer the phone at all times. Please be patient and keep trying.)

For further information regarding Covid-19, risk factors, safety recommendations, how to make your own face mask, and more, please visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>.