



Superior Courts
Waycross Judicial Circuit

DWAYNE H. GILLIS
CHIEF JUDGE

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MEMO

Recorded in office of the clerk
of Superior Court, Pierce County, Ga
this 29th day of June 20 21
Thomas W. Sahl
Clerk of Superior Court, Pierce County, GA.

DATE: June 28, 2021

TO: Clerks, District Attorney, Public Defender, Sheriffs, County Administrators,
County Commissioners, Superior Court Judges, State Court Judges, Juvenile
Court Judges, Probate Court Judges, Magistrate Judges, Municipal Court Judges

FROM: Dwayne H. Gillis, Chief Judge

All,

Effective June 30, 2021 at 11:59 p.m., all Supreme Court and Gubernatorial Emergency Orders will expire. My emergency order expired by law several weeks ago. Accordingly, the authority of the superior court bench to regulate and control COVID-19 in the "courthouse" will cease. Of course pursuant to the inherent authority of the Court, each judge will retain the authority to control his/her courtroom for safety issues, to include COVID-19 related safety issues.

Effective July 1, 2021 and thereafter, there will not be a requirement to "screen" persons entering the courthouse, this refers to temperature checks, name taking, health questions, travel issues, and so forth. Regular weapon and phone screenings shall continue as performed prior to COVID.

I urge everyone to stay abreast of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines and to use what we all have experienced and learned during these trying times. You may expect that there will be changes, i.e., social distancing will not be six feet nor will it be shoulder to shoulder, masks will be optional to each individual and hand sanitizers should stay in place. Each judge will direct the bailiffs and security personnel on how she/he wants to conduct safety precautions. If a person voluntarily reports COVID exposure or symptoms, report this to the clerk and judge immediately. Please do the same for persons who voluntarily report they are in high risk situation.

I, on behalf of each superior court judge, want to convey our deepest gratitude, appreciation and respect for each of you in the way you have discharged your duties during this very trying time.

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You have made our jobs much easier and you are owed a debt that cannot be repaid! You are to be commended for the professionalism and compassion you have displayed throughout this pandemic. Your dedication to duty and oath has saved lives! This dedication which you have displayed has assured that the courts did not shut down and that the business of the court continued throughout the pandemic. We are grateful and consider it an honor to have worked with each of you during this time.

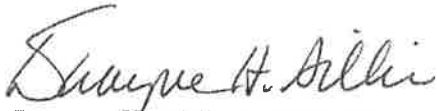
Going forward, there are more questions than answers, as you can see from this memo. CDC guidance has two tracts now: 1) vaccinated and 2) not vaccinated. The Court has no authority or means to determine which category a person falls in. One size no longer fits all as before. For example, if one is vaccinated, we cannot order that person in a mask because that would violate CDC guidelines too. I trust you see the dilemma that the Court is in.

Rest assured that the superior court judges will keep monitoring COVID numbers in our circuit. If circumstances change, we will revisit safety issues on an as needed basis. If you have COVID related news, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of us.

We will continue the use of video conferencing when possible. Everyone should plan on using this technology in an ever expanding way where possible.

The Lord willing this will be my last COVID related memo. I close reminding you of how much the superior court judges appreciate your efforts.

Kindest regards,



Dwayne H. Gillis, Chief Judge
Waycross Judicial Circuit

DHG/tgp