

Status of Georgia and Alabama Court Openings and Stays Due to COVID-19

Last Updated: July 14, 2020

ALABAMA STATE COURTS

- Courts are permitted to recommence in-person, non-jury court proceedings after May 15, 2020, but individual circuits may extend restriction of such proceedings up to **Aug. 15, 2020**, within their discretion.
- Jury trials are suspended until **Sept. 14, 2020**.
- All other deadlines set to expire beginning March 15, 2020, were extended to May 15, 2020.
- Statutory periods of repose and statutes of limitations were not extended.
- The Alabama Judicial Building reopened to the public on June 2, 2020.
- Local court information and guidelines are available [here](#).

ALABAMA FEDERAL COURTS

Middle District of Alabama

- Jury trials and trial-specific deadlines scheduled for the period from March 17-April 16, 2020, were extended for 30 days.
- Any requirements for delivery of courtesy copies of filings to judges' chambers are suspended until further order.
- Deadlines for motions that can be resolved without oral argument were not altered.
- Face masks are required in courthouses.
- Video and telephone conferencing is permitted in certain criminal proceedings.

Northern District of Alabama

- Discovery deadlines and briefing schedules were stayed for 28 days from March 17-April 14, 2020.
- Statutory periods of repose and statutes of limitations were not extended.
- Prohibition on jury trials and grand jury proceedings was terminated on June 17, 2020.
- Face masks are required in courthouses.
- Video and telephone conferencing is permitted in certain criminal proceedings until **September 2020**.

Southern District of Alabama

- Telephone or video appearance for court proceedings is permitted from March 13, 2020, until 30 days after the termination of the national emergency declaration.
- Face masks and COVID-19 screenings are required for entry to courthouses.

GEORGIA STATE COURTS

- Statewide judicial emergency is currently in effect and expires on **Aug. 11, 2020**.
- Jury trials are prohibited until further order.
- Deadlines for jury trial proceedings (including statutory speedy trial demands), deadlines for grand jury proceedings and deadlines calculated by reference to the date of a civil or criminal jury trial or grand jury proceeding remain suspended and tolled.
- All deadlines not related to jury trial or grand jury proceedings are reimposed as of **July 14, 2020**:
 - In cases already pending before March 14, litigants will have the same amount of time to file or act after **July 14** that they had as of March 14.
 - In cases filed between March 14 and July 13, the time for deadlines will begin running on **July 14**.
 - In cases filed on or after **July 14**, litigants must comply with the normal deadlines applicable to the case.
- Telephone or video appearance in court proceedings is encouraged.
- Individual courts have discretion to conduct in-person court proceedings, but compliance with public health guidance is required.
- Each court must develop its own operating guidelines for in-court proceedings.
- Additional guidance can be found [here](#).

GEORGIA FEDERAL COURTS

Middle District of Georgia

- Jury trials are prohibited until **Sept. 13, 2020**.
- Telephone or video appearances in non-jury court proceedings is permitted until **Sept. 30, 2020**.
- **Essential, in-person, non-jury proceedings resume July 13, 2020**
- **Face masks are required in courthouses.**

Northern District of Georgia

- Jury trials are prohibited until **Aug. 30, 2020**.
- In-person, non-jury court proceedings are permitted.
- All deadlines for motions not requiring oral argument remain in effect.

Southern District of Georgia

- Access to courthouses is restricted by health guidelines, but jury trials and in-person hearings are not prohibited.

U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT (APPELLATE COURT FOR FEDERAL DISTRICT COURTS IN ALABAMA, FLORIDA AND GEORGIA)

- Requirements for paper filings are suspended until further order.
- Oral argument may be held by audio or teleconferencing until further order.

If you have any questions or wish to further discuss issues related to COVID-19, please contact a Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers attorney at 404.874.8800 or via our website, www.swiftcurrie.com.

The foregoing is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of the full effect of these changes. Nothing in this notice should be construed as legal advice. This document is intended only to notify our clients and other interested parties about important recent developments. Every effort has been made to ascertain the accuracy of the information contained within this notice.