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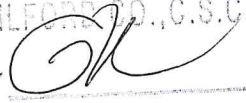
Amended January 20, 2021

FILED

To: Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

2021 JAN 21 A 11:01

From: Honorable Teresa Vincent, Chief District Court Judge

GUILFORD CO., C.S.C.  
BY: 

IT APPEARING TO THE COURT that on March 13, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper declared a state of emergency and recognized that the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services recommends that “people at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 avoid large groups of people as much as possible” and further recognized that the “people at high risk of severe illness” are “adults over 65 years, those with underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes, or with weakened immune systems;”

IT APPEARING TO THE COURT that the Guilford County Health Director has designated the Guilford County Courthouse (GSO) as a “hot spot” due to the number of COVID-19 positive employees and those exposed to the virus requiring testing and time to quarantine; and also recommended restricting access to courts and the building.; and it also appearing to the Court that Clerk of Superior Court employees have been significantly impacted and workforce in Greensboro and High Point are greatly diminished;

AND IT FURTHER APPEARING TO THE COURT that the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services recommends for “Mass Gathering Events” that the event organizers, in part: 1) urge everyone who is sick not to attend; 2) encourage those who are at high risk as described above not attend; 3) find ways to give people more physical space to limit close contact as much as possible; and 4) encourage attendees to wash hands frequently;

AND IT FURTHER APPEARING TO THE COURT that Article 1, Section 18 of the North Carolina Constitution provides “All courts shall be open; every person for an injury done him in his lands, goods, person, or reputation shall have remedy by due course of law, and right and justice shall be administered without favor, denial or delay;”

***The Clerk’s Office will remain open from 9:00 am to 3:00 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 is open from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, unless otherwise notified. 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.

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.

## 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 February 1, 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.

## 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 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.) 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 during regular business hours.

## Civil/Domestic District Courts

- Courtrooms 2A (GSO) & 3A (Hpt) – Courts will operate as indicated in the following provisions. Emergency custody hearings will also be held in courtrooms 2A (GSO) & 3A (Hpt). (Note: GSO- Due to the high volume of cases in courtroom 2B and the inability to control calendaring, cases in courtroom 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 to five cases per courtroom at 9:00 am and 2:00 pm 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 via zoom at 9:00 am Monday through Friday, unless otherwise notified. The court shall email virtual courtroom links to attorneys for daily calendar call. Pro Se litigants may also receive a virtual courtroom link upon request. If the court schedules a matter for a remote hearing, the court will disseminate a separate link (separate from the daily calendar call link) for a virtual courtroom to attorneys and/or litigants. Cases will be heard in-person UNLESS the court designates the case for a remote hearing. After the daily calendar call, the judge will announce the order in which cases shall be heard. For in-person hearings, only attorneys and litigants whose case is being heard are permitted in the courtroom. (Witnesses may be asked to wait outside the court to achieve social distancing.) Please contact Stephanie Wallace or Pat Dixon if you need assistance.

**Note:** If you cannot access a judge in the High Point courthouse for signatures, please contact Mrs. Pat Dixon at (336) 822-6712. If you cannot reach Mrs. Pat Dixon, please contact Mrs. Stephanie Wallace at (336) 412-7814.

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 to the Courtroom Clerk 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).

### **Criminal/Traffic District Court**

- **The Court resumed in person normal operating hours for all cases on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, unless remote hearings were scheduled by the court.**
- The DA shall calendar felony court cases in **Courtroom 3H** (GSO) on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning February 1, 2021, unless otherwise notified. 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).
- Traffic court shall operate as usual. except 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, DWLR Impaired Revocations, and cases involving victims). If attorneys schedule cases unrelated to DWI, DWLR Impaired Revocations, Three-Digit Speeding cases, and alleged Victim cases in a traffic courtroom, the Court will remove or continue the cases.
- Remote Traffic Court (for attorneys) shall be held (unless otherwise notified) on Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, and 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 Wednesdays 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](http://www.nccourts.org). The form shall be submitted to the clerk's office in Greensboro via email at [Guilford.GB.CriminalDistrict@nccourts.org](mailto:Guilford.GB.CriminalDistrict@nccourts.org) and High Point at [Guilford.HP.CriminalDistrict@nccourts.org](mailto:Guilford.HP.CriminalDistrict@nccourts.org).

- Courtroom 2C (GSO) felony court cases will be heard in **Courtroom 3H** (GSO) on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning February 1, 2021, unless otherwise notified. Domestic First Appearances shall continue to be heard with First Appearances in courtroom 2C as scheduled, unless otherwise notified. The court shall continue to hear First Appearances/Bond Motions at 2:00 pm each day (unless otherwise notified).
- **Courtroom 3B (GSO) will resume hearing traffic and misdemeanor criminal trials on Mondays and Tuesdays beginning on February 3, 2021.**
- 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) resumed on January 20, 2021. Effective February 1, 2021, Courtroom 1B (GSO) shall operate Monday thru Friday. Courtroom 3B (Administrative Court in Hpt) shall reopen January 25, 2021, unless otherwise notified. 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. **Beginning on January 25, 2021, court shall resume normal operating hours Monday thru Friday (9:00 am to 5:00 pm), unless otherwise notified. Courtroom 2C (GSO) shall be available as an overflow room to courtroom 2D from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm Monday through Friday of each week, until otherwise notified.** 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 and shall have remote hearings when it is feasible to do so.

## Minor Settlement Conferences

- Minor settlements will be heard every other Wednesday in courtroom 2B at 2:00 pm in Greensboro and courtroom 3A in High Point, NC, by appointment, unless they are held remotely. The court is requesting that attorneys conduct these hearings remotely when it is feasible to do so. Please contact Joyce Morant (Judicial Assistant) in Greensboro or Pat Dixon in High Point (Trial Court Coordinator) to schedule a settlement conference.

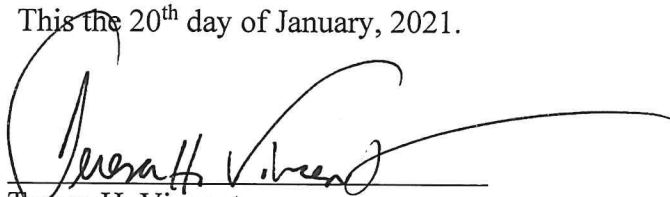
## Remote Hearings/In Person Hearings:

- Beginning on February 1, 2021, all courts are available for in-person hearings. However, cases shall be heard remotely when it is feasible to do so.

## High Point Courts:

- The public elevators are inoperable. The public will be required to take the steps until the repairs are completed. Security will make accommodations for handicapped individuals.

This the 20<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021.



Teresa H, Vincent  
Chief District Court Judge, 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

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