

COVID-19 Mitigation March 22, 2020

Revised Probate Court Procedures

On March 14, 2020, the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court issued the ORDER DECLARING STATEWIDE JUDICIAL EMERGENCY requiring the following:

To the extent feasible, courts should remain open to address essential functions, and in particular, courts should give priority to matters necessary to protect health, safety, and liberty of individuals.

On April 9, 2020, the Chief Justice extended the ***Statewide Judicial Emergency which will terminate on May 13, 2020, at 11:59 p.m., unless otherwise modified or extended.***

Chatham County Probate Court does not videoconference or e-file, and our current office space does not allow for social distancing. Probate Court staff is, therefore, uniquely vulnerable to close contact with walk-in traffic public which makes limiting the risk of exposure impossible.

Therefore, Probate Court will take the following measures to “limit the risk of exposure” for public and staff:

1. Probate Court does NOT OFFER COURTHOUSE WEDDINGS.
2. **Weapons Carry License Applications:** Probate Court of Chatham County is suspending the acceptance and processing of applications for new and renewal weapons carry licenses (“WCL”) through the end of the judicial emergency. Under the Chief Justice’s declaration, if you currently hold a valid WCL which would expire before the end of the judicial emergency, that expiration date is tolled or suspended.
3. **Marriage License Applications:** Probate Court will process Marriage Licenses BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Please go to <https://courts.chathamcountyga.gov/Probate/MarriageLicenses> for more specific instructions. Marriage Application forms are available on the Probate Court website and should be emailed to wwwilliamson@chathamcounty.org requesting an appointment. Probate Court staff will communicate with you through the email address you use. Probate Court will accept **CASH ONLY** in the exact amount for marriage license applications.
4. **Estate / Guardianship / Conservatorship:** Probate Court will accept Estate / Guardianship / Conservatorship filings by mail. If you have an emergency issue about an estate / guardianship / conservatorship, please call (912) 652-7264 option 4. The Court will notify parties if a hearing is scheduled or cancelled.
5. **Research and Record Requests:** Probate Court will continue to process research and record requests by mail or email. To speak to staff in the Record Room please call (912) 652-7264 option 1. Email requests to pcook@chathamcounty.org.
6. **Mental Health affidavits and committal hearings:** Probate Court will address mental health affidavits and commitment hearings as needed. If you need assistance, please call (912) 652-7264 option 4.

We ask all individuals visiting the Probate Court to use “common sense” and follow the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and the Georgia Department of Public Health. Please DO NOT COME to the Court if you have a fever or symptoms of respiratory illness or have been exposed to a person with coronavirus, flu or other communicable disease.