

**IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF OPELIKA, ALABAMA
RE: COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

March 16, 2020

ORDER OUTLINING COURT PROCEDURES

Pursuant to the Order of the Supreme Court of Alabama issued on March 13, 2020, the Opelika Municipal Court hereby adopts the following procedures and guidelines which shall remain in effect until April 16, 2020, or until such time as the Supreme Court of Alabama issues further Orders related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

1. Court proceedings necessary to protect the constitutional rights of criminal defendants, including bond-related matters and emergency law enforcement matters, shall be conducted in-person at the regular scheduled time in court at the Opelika Municipal Court. Only those necessary for these matters shall be allowed in the courtroom unless otherwise requested to protect the rights to an open court.
2. Any permitted in-court proceedings shall be limited to necessary court personnel, attorneys, law enforcement, defendants, witnesses, court security, and any other necessary persons as determined by the trial judge.
3. Attorneys who have filed a Notice of Appearance on behalf of Defendants shall be notified of this Order and given the option of concluding any necessary plea agreements, pre-trial diversion applications, or other motions before the court by mail, at the discretion of the trial judge.

4. The Court Staff will have a person available at the door at the regular scheduled court times in order for defendants and subpoenaed witnesses to sign an acknowledgement to return to court for their matter at a future date that coincides with the next court date of the police officers shift. Said acknowledgment shall have the full force and effect of any subpoena or court order.

5. The Trial Judge for a particular date shall have the authority to modify these orders as needed to protect the constitutional rights of any person and to adjust for any emergency matters as needed.

6. The Court reserves the right to modify this order as the situation presents.

Done this the 16th day of March, 2020.



Ben Hand
Presiding Judge



Wes McCollum
Judge