

**TEMPORARY PROTOCOL**  
**for**  
**Civil Trials in the Magistrate Court**  
**Statements of Claim and Dispossessory Cases**  
**As of July 14, 2020**

Due to orders of the Georgia Supreme Court and the Superior Court of Cherokee County concerning reopening the courts during the COVID-19 pandemic, the following protocols are in effect for bench trials in civil cases in the Magistrate Court:

1. All in-person bench trials in civil cases are postponed indefinitely.

2. Each case that is ready for trial will be scheduled for a videoconference conciliation hearing, using the Zoom platform, where the parties will have an opportunity to speak privately to try to settle their case. If they do not settle, they will be given the option of trying their case by videoconference on a later date.

3. A party may elect to have his or her case tried by videoconference by submitting a written waiver on a form to be provided by the Court. No one will be required to file a waiver or to have a videoconference bench trial.

4. If all parties elect a videoconference trial, the trial will be set for a date following the conciliation hearing date. If any party declines a videoconference trial, the case will be set for trial after the courtrooms reopen.

5. Parties who want to call witnesses (including witnesses under subpoena) will submit sufficient contact information for each witness to the Judge's Administrative Assistant, to enable to Court to send a proper trial notice.

6. Documentary evidence must be emailed to the Administrative Assistant at least 24 hours prior to the trial.

7. All other normal trial procedures shall be followed.

8. Exceptions for technical issues will be handled on a case-by-case basis.