

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

Due to COVID-19 pandemic and local health considerations, the Cherokee County courtrooms are closed to in-person trials for the indefinite future.

1. Normal deadlines to file answers, and any other documents for which a deadline is involved, have been reinstated. All parties will be given credit for the time during which such deadlines had been tolled.

2. This Court cannot conduct any civil trials in person at this time. Courtrooms have been closed by Order of the Superior Court.

3. This Court can hear motions and conduct bench trials by videoconference. The Court can only conduct a videoconference bench trial if every party to a case agrees and waives his or her right to an in-person trial in writing.

4. Per O.C.G.A. § 15-10-44(a), immediately before trial the Magistrate Court "shall counsel the parties to make an earnest effort to settle the controversy by conciliation."

The Court will schedule videoconference status hearings for cases that are ready for trial. At those hearings, the parties will be removed to a private, virtual conference room for settlement discussions. If the parties to a case can't settle, the Court will ask whether they want to try their case by videoconference. If all parties agree, they will submit written waivers. The trial will be scheduled, and notices delivered, after the waivers have been received.

If any party declines to waive an in-person trial, the trial will be scheduled in the future after the courtrooms reopen.

***The court clerks and judges cannot, and will not, calculate the deadlines for you. The deadline to file an answer or other document in any case is a legal issue. Clerks and judges are not permitted to give parties legal advice.***