

FROM MOUNTAIN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT CHIEF JUDGE RUSSELL SMITH

For Immediate Distribution

Following the Declarations of Public Health Emergency by both the President of the United States and the Governor of the State of Georgia, Chief Justice Harold Melton of the Georgia Supreme Court on March 14, 2020 issued a Declaration of Judicial Emergency effective until April 13. That Declaration effectively halts the hearing of all civil and criminal matters except specified essential functions, which include emergency matters relating to criminal and civil cases. It also extends the statutes of limitations and most deadlines during which action must be taken.

In accordance with the Chief Justice's Declaration, Chief Superior Court Judge Russell W. Smith and Judge B. Chan Caudell have issued a Declaration/Standing Order for purpose of giving the Clerks, Attorneys and Public guidance as to how the courts will operate during the period that the Chief Justice's Order remains in effect.

The Court's order does not have the effect of closing the county courthouses, which will remain open until and unless closed by the county governing authorities. While the Chief Justice's order remains in effect, the courts will continue to hear emergency matters both in chambers and in court, when necessary. The Judges of all courts will remain available at all times to address issues relating to emergency matters in all civil and criminal cases.

Litigants should direct any questions regarding a particular case to their attorneys. Any general questions or concerns may be directed to Chief Judge Russell W. Smith by email to livester.scsec@gmail.com or at his office at (706) 886-7525.