



Ben Hill County Probate Court
David T. Hobby, Judge

111 SOUTH SHERIDAN STREET
FITZGERALD, GA 31750-2866

Telephone (229) 426-5137 • Telefax (229) 426-5486

Melinda Stembridge, Associate Judge
melinda.stembridge@benhillcounty-ga.gov

Dawn Ryals, Clerk

**COVID-19 MITIGATION
RESPONSE TO ORDER DECLARING STATEWIDE JUDICIAL EMERGENCY**

On March 14, 2020, the Honorable Harold D. Melton, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia issued an Order Declaring a Statewide Judicial Emergency in the State of Georgia until April 13, 2020. This Order restricts Court activity to "essential functions". Therefore, as to Probate Courts the following are deemed essential functions as to the general public:

- Emergency guardianship/conservatorship
- Permanent guardianship/conservatorship, specifically petitions with accusations of abuse, neglect, or harm
- Other legitimate emergency petitions or motions
- Medical consent guardianships
- Involuntary treatment/mental health petitions
- Vital Records
- Marriage licenses

The following are deemed non-essential and therefore not handled by the Probate Court until April 14, 2020:

- Filing estate petitions (we will accept petitions by mail)
- Issuing weapons carry licenses (see attached information regarding expiring weapons carry licenses.)
- Genealogy research
- Records research
- Weddings

The court will handle hearings required for any incarcerated individual. All other court dates, both for civil and criminal matters, are hereby postponed. Payments on citations due by March 27, 2020 are hereby extended to May 8, 2020.

Birth and death certificates may be obtained by online or mail requests. See the following information for the request procedures. www.benhillcounty-ga.gov click on departments, then Probate Court

The purpose of this Order is to encourage citizens to limit their contact with the public and to stay home when possible. We appreciate your cooperation and anxiously await the opportunity to again provide you with the full resources of the Ben Hill County Probate Court. This is a fluid situation and we will be constantly reviewing the Probate Court policies and procedures to ensure that the Court is operating in the best manner to serve the citizens of Ben Hill County in these unusual times. Thank you for your patience and understanding. Should you have any questions, please call our new number: 229-922-0246.

Weapons Carry License Information Sheet Regarding Chief Justice Melton's Statewide Judicial Emergency Order dated March 14, 2020

Probate Courts across the state of Georgia will temporarily suspend acceptance of applications for Weapons Carry Licenses and Renewal Weapons Carry Licenses pursuant to an Order of the Supreme Court of Georgia declaring a Judicial Emergency. That Order may be found at <https://www.gasupreme.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CJ-Melton-amended-Statewide-Jud-Emergency-order.pdf>

This does not affect your right to carry pursuant to the Constitution if you have a Georgia Weapons Carry License.

If you are due to renew during the Emergency period, your license will not expire. Chief Justice Melton's Order essentially pushes "PAUSE" on all deadlines created by law or rule. Therefore, you will still be able to renew after the Emergency ends and your current license will remain valid until that time. Presently, that date is April 13, 2020. If that date is extended, further order will issue.

To give you a concrete example of how this will work, simply add 30 days to whatever your expiration or renewal deadline is. A license expiring March 18, 2020, will expire April 18, 2020. The renewal deadline will extend to May 18, 2020.

We thank you for your patience in this unusual time. If you have further questions, please call the court and we will be glad to help you.

Ben Hill County Probate Court
Judge David Hobby
229-922-0246

TO REQUEST A BIRTH CERTIFICATE BY MAIL, WE NEED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

BIRTH NAME
DATE OF BIRTH
MOTHER'S NAME
FATHER'S NAME
COUNTY OF BIRTH

HOW IS THE PERSON NAMED ON THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE RELATED TO YOU? (EXAMPLE – SELF, MOTHER, CHILD, GRANDCHILD...)

HOW MANY COPIES DO YOU NEED? (all copies are certified)
\$25.00 for first copy, \$5.00 for each additional copy of the same record.

Your name:
Your address:
Your phone number:

Type of payment you are submitting:

Please be advise that ONLY the following people can get your birth certificate: Yourself, a Parent, Grandparent, Adult Sibling, Adult Child, Spouse, Legal Guardian, with appropriate paperwork.

You, the requestor, must submit a copy of your picture ID to receive the birth certificate. Without ID, we cannot issue a birth certificate.

Mail your request with appropriate payment and a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Probate Court, 111 S. Sheridan Street, Fitzgerald, GA 31750.

Questions? Call us at 229-922-0246 or email melinda.stembridge@benhillcounty-ga.gov

TO REQUEST A DEATH CERTIFICATE BY MAIL, WE NEED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

NAME OF DECEASED
DATE OF DEATH
MOTHER'S NAME
FATHER'S NAME
COUNTY OF DEATH

HOW IS THE PERSON NAMED ON THE DEATH CERTIFICATE RELATED TO YOU? (EXAMPLE – SELF, PARENT, CHILD, GRANDPARENT, SIBLING, SPOUSE...)

HOW MANY COPIES DO YOU NEED? (all copies are certified)
\$25.00 for first copy, \$5.00 for each additional copy of the same record.

Your name:

Your address:

Your phone number:

Type of payment you are submitting:

Please be advise that anyone can request a death certificate, however, only immediate family can have the cause of death listed. Non immediate family members will not have cause of death or Social Security Number listed on the certificate.

You, the requestor, must submit a copy of your picture ID to receive the death certificate. Without ID, we cannot issue a death certificate.

Mail your request with appropriate payment and a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Probate Court, 111 S. Sheridan Street, Fitzgerald, GA 31750.

Questions? Call us at 229-922-0246 or email melinda.stembridge@benhillcounty-ga.gov