

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Parker County Judiciary

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, the courts of Parker County, Texas, will implement the following protective measures:

General

1. All judges will comply with the Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas and Court of Criminal Appeals, including conducting in-person proceedings according to the guidance issued by the Office of Court Administration regarding social distancing, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions.
2. All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The local administrative district judge will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and county judge, adjusting this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the county.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Daily symptomatic inquiry of all persons staffing the courts.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.6°F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 or actual life-threatening disease will not be permitted to enter the building and should seek medical advice.
4. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings unless separated by physical barriers, maintain recommended distance from others, and practice appropriate sanitation.
5. Protective Measures: Reciprocal measure to be employed for court attendees.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Remotely conducted hearings/trials, no group scheduling of cases.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals disclosing serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations.
2. Each judge will include information on orders setting hearings, dockets notices, and in other communications notifying individuals who are medically considered vulnerable to

life-threatening disease or the ability to contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations. A notice with this information will be posted on the courts' websites and in conspicuous locations around the court building.

3. Vulnerable people who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by measures historically taken by the courts as well as by employing procedures and cautions recommended by those having knowledge of the subject.

Social Distancing

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court building will be required to maintain an appropriate distance from others of at least 6 feet.
2. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in an elevator. If more than one individual from the same household is in an elevator, no other individuals will be permitted in the elevator.
3. Each restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity is posted on each restroom door.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, are closed to the public.

Gallery

5. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom will be posted as circumstances require. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
6. The gallery of the courtroom identifies the appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is arranged for appropriate spacing of attendees.

Well

7. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and clerk, court reporter, and bailiff seating are arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers are placed at the entrances to the building, outside of elevators on each floor, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues are available in and near the courtroom, at the witness stand, and in the lobby.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, court security personnel, to the extent permitted by law, will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have a cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing; or have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Individuals who answer in the affirmative to any of these questions may be refused admittance to the court building.
2. When individuals first attempt to enter the court building, security or court personnel will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F will be refused admittance to the court building.

3. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperature taken prior to transport. Inmates with symptoms or a temperature equal to or above 99.6°F will not be transported to the court building.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including gloves and mask.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court building for over 1 hour will be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

Cleaning

1. In accord with county policy, court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every two hours or as soon as practicable considering the number and competing duties of the cleaning staff.
2. In accord with county policy, court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. In accord with county policy, court building cleaning staff are provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. In accord with county policy, court building cleaning staff are trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

Individual circumstances may require modification of these requirements from time to time directed toward preservation of public health.

I conferred with all judges of district, county, and justice courts regarding this Operating Plan and the required compliance with such. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and county judge, whose signatures appear below.

Date: 5/26/2020

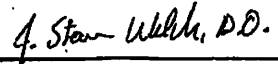


Local Administrative District Judge

Approved:



Parker County Judge



Statutory Health Officer, Parker County