

## **NUECES COUNTY PRECINCT 3**

**JUSTICE OF THE PEACE,**

**LARRYL. LAWRENCE**

### **COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN**

- 1) Judge and Court Staff Health: (How the court will ensure that the judge and court staff do not enter the county annex building if they have new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and will protect the judge and staff from exposure to COVID-19)**

The Judge and staff will be required to report any away from work travel to any current COVID-19 hotspot. The Judge will report to the current Nueces County Justice of the Peace Presiding Judge and the Judge's staff will report to the Judge by either telephone or phone text. If the Judge or a staff member reports that he or she traveled to a COVID-19 hot spot, they will be encouraged to contact their physician and/or the Corpus Christi-Nueces County Public Health District (Health Department) at (361) 826-7200 Option 2 for further guidance prior to returning to work. If the Judge or a staff member is required to stay away from work for an extended period, the Judge will contact the Nueces County Human Resources Department immediately for employee compensation guidance.

Daily temperature checks will be required for all employees before reporting to work. If the Judge or a staff member has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher and/or they have new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea or have had close contact with a person confirmed to have COVID-19, they will not be permitted to report to work and will be asked to contact their physician for medical treatment and/or the Health Department at (361) 826-7200 Option 2 for guidance. Nueces County Pet. 3 court staff members will be required to immediately contact the judge by telephone or telephone text message to report any of the above symptoms. If the Judge shows any COVID-19 symptoms, he will be required to report that to the Nueces County Justice of the Peace Presiding Judge. I will contact my physician for medical treatment and/or the Health Department at (361) 826-7200 Option 2 for guidance and I will not report to work.

- 2) Scheduling Hearings, Bench Trails and Pre-trials (How the court in the county annex building covered by this plan will coordinate scheduling to reduce occupancy to the lowest degree possible)**

Absolutely no jury trails will be scheduled until further notice and without approval from the Office of Court Administration (OCA). A Nueces County Pet. 3 Constable Deputy (Bailiff) will be present to enforce the following rules.

- 1) Prior to the scheduled date of all hearings, written notice will be mailed to the defendant(s) and attorneys with an explanation of the courtroom waiting lobby and courtroom rules for protection against COVID-19.
- 2) Due to the size of the courtroom waiting lobby, there will only be 6 people allowed in the courtroom waiting lobby at any one given time.
- 3) Prior to entering the courtroom waiting lobby, everyone will have their temperature taken with a non-contact infrared thermometer.
- 4) If a person's temperature shows a reading of 100 degrees or higher, their scheduled pre-trial hearing will be cancelled and they will not be permitted to enter the courtroom waiting area and they will be

asked to leave the county building annex and encouraged to contact their physician for medical treatment and/or the Health Department at (361) 826-7200 Option 2 for further guidance.

*This will include but will not be limited to the prosecutor, defense attorney, defendant(s) and witnesses for either the defense or prosecution.*

- 5) Everyone within the inside boundaries of the courtroom waiting lobby and the courtroom including the judge will be required to wear a face mask designed to cover the nose and mouth for the duration of the hearing(s).

All non-essential hearings and trials such as evictions, property hearings, bench trials, pre-trials, etc. will be by virtual means (ZOOM) when possible. If it is impossible for any person(s) involved to participate by "ZOOM" and the issue at hand is deemed essential, it will be scheduled with health and safety in mind for all participants and will only be scheduled to take place after June 1, 2020 and only after the Office of Court Administration (OCA) has granted permission to do so.

The court will only schedule one (1) in-person hearing between the hours of 9:00am and 11:00am and if needed, one between the hours of 2:00pm and 4:00pm in any one regular business day. This will give the onsite custodian time to thoroughly clean and sanitize the courtroom waiting lobby, the waiting lobby men's and women's restroom, the courtroom, and any high touch areas.

Pre-trials will be scheduled for the allotted day of the month that the prosecutor is scheduled to be at this court and this day only. Prior to the beginning of the pre-trials, the onsite county annex custodian will thoroughly clean and sanitize the courtroom waiting lobby, the waiting lobby men's and women's restroom, the courtroom, and high touch areas. A total of 12 pre-trials will be scheduled for this day and will be scheduled as follows:

- Six (6) will be scheduled between the hours of 9:00am and 11:00am for 30 minutes each with ten (10) minute intervals between each pre-trial. During the 10-minute intervals, the onsite county annex custodian will sanitize the courtroom tables, chairs, and doorknobs prior to the next scheduled pre-trial.
- Six (6) pre-trials will be scheduled between the hours of 1:00pm and 4:00pm with ten (10) intervals between each pre-trial. During the 10-minute intervals, the onsite county annex custodian will sanitize the courtroom tables, chairs, and doorknobs.

During the pre-trials, the only persons will be allowed in the courtroom will be the prosecutor and the defendant. Social distancing of at least six (6) feet will be required along with face mask designed to cover the nose and mouth for the duration of the pre-trial. Prior to the approval from the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to hold onsite in-person hearings, all pre-trials will be conducted by teleconference or virtual (ZOOM) between the prosecutor and the defendant. All appropriate paperwork I forms will be faxed or emailed to the defendant for his or her approval and signature. Once this has been signed by the defendant, a copy will be required to be either faxed or email back to the court no later than the following business day to be recorded and filed in the defendant's case file jacket.

**3) Vulnerable Population (How this court will provide notice to vulnerable individuals and those who live with or are caregivers for vulnerable individuals and provide accommodations to reduce the appearance of those individuals)**

All means possible for the protection of health and safety will be considered and taken for vulnerable individuals over the age of 65 and for individuals with serious underlying health conditions of all ages. If an individual informs the court that he or she has an underlying health condition such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma or weak immune systems or for any reason, the court will take every means possible to hold their hearing by utilizing teleconference or "ZOOM". After this hearing is complete, all appropriate documents and/or forms will be either faxed or emailed to the parties involved at either a fax number or email address provided to the court by all parties involved. If a fax number or email address is not available, all documents and/or forms will be mailed to an address provided to the court by all parties involved. If any forms or documents are to be signed and returned to the court, we will ask that they return those documents or forms no later than the next regular business day by either fax, email, or U.S. mail. If for any reason a teleconference or virtual (ZOOM) hearing is not feasible for a vulnerable individual, their hearing will be scheduled to be heard after June 1, 2020 and only after in-person hearings have been approved by the Office of Court Administration (OCA). Their hearing will be scheduled for a time suitable to them and the court but only between the hours of 9:00am and 12:00pm or 1:00pm and 4:00pm on any regular business day that this court is open. Upon the defendant(s), witnesses or attorney's arrival, a Nueces County Pet. 3 Deputy Constable (Bailiff) will be available to take the temperature of all parties. If any person's temperature reads 100 degrees or higher, their hearing will be cancelled, and that individual will be asked to leave the county building and encouraged to contact the Health Department for guidance. If their case is cancelled due to any unforeseen reasons, it will be rescheduled for a later date and notification will be sent to all parties involved of the reset date and time. No other hearings will be scheduled for the same date as any person falling into the "Vulnerable population" category. Prior to the hearing on the date that the hearing is scheduled, the courtroom waiting lobby, the courtroom waiting lobby men's and women's restroom and the courtroom will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized by the onsite county annex custodian. After the hearing is complete and everyone involved has left the area, the onsite county annex custodian will thoroughly clean and sanitize the courtroom lobby waiting area, the courtroom lobby waiting area men's and women's restroom and the courtroom prior to anyone being allowed to enter the areas.

**4) Social Distancing (How this court will ensure that adequate social distancing will be maintained for all individuals not within the same household who may be within the Nueces County Precinct 3, Justice of the Peace office and courtroom area's)**

Due to the size and space of the main public hallway in front of the staff's workstations, five (5) chairs spaced at a minimum of six (6) feet apart will be available for customers to utilize. Markings will be placed on the floor to indicate the location of each chair to remain till further notice. The courtroom waiting lobby has limited space and will only have six (6) chairs spaced at a minimum of six (6) feet apart. Markings will be placed on the floor to indicate the location of each chair to remain till further notice. There will not be any tables or desk of any type within the courtroom waiting lobby. No more than six (6) persons will be allowed to enter the courtroom waiting lobby at any one given time. The courtroom will have no more than ten (10) persons at any one given time. This will include the judge, bailiff, prosecutor, plaintiff, defendant, defense attorney witnesses and spectators. The prosecutors I plaintiffs table and the defendants table are of the exact dimensions with the length being six (6) feet. A chair will be placed at each end with the inside end of each chair being distanced at 6 feet apart from each other. Currently there are five (5) seats for spectators for the public and each has been placed at a minimum distance of six (6) feet apart. The floors will be marked for placement of all chairs inside the courtroom till further notice. The number of spectators from the public

allowed in the courtroom at any given time during a hearing of any type will be based on the number of hearing participants inside the courtroom and will be limited based on that number not to exceed ten (10) persons total inside the courtroom at any given time. EXAMPLE: During a hearing of any type if there is a judge, bailiff, prosecutor, witness for the State, defense attorney, defendant and a witness for the defense then their will only be three (3) spectators from the public allowed to be inside the courtroom. A Nueces County Pet. 3 Constable Deputy (Bailiff) will be available to enforce social distancing.

**5) Hygiene (How the court will ensure that individuals in the Pet. 3 County Annex will have access to supplies to maintain high levels of hygiene)**

One hand sanitizing station will be set up and placed at the main entrance into the County annex building for the public to utilize as they enter and exit the building. Hand sanitizing bottles and one box of tissue will be placed at each staff members work area window for customers to use along with one trash container at each window. One hand sanitizing station will be placed in the courtroom waiting lobby with one box of tissue and a trash container for people waiting to go inside the courtroom to use. One bottle of hand sanitizer will be placed inside of the men's and women's restroom adjoining the courtroom waiting lobby with a box of tissue in each restroom. One hand sanitizing station will be placed at the entrance door of the courtroom for anyone entering the courtroom to use along with a trash container. Hand sanitizing bottles (One each) will be placed at the prosecutor and defense table in the courtroom along with a box of tissue at each table. Small trash containers will be placed on the floor at each table. One bottle of hand sanitizer will be placed at the judge's bench for the judge to use regularly along with a box of tissue and a trash container. Personal hygiene signs will be placed at the main entrance door of the County annex, at each staff member's work window, inside the courtroom waiting lobby, at the entrance door of the courtroom, in each of the restrooms (Men's & women's) and inside the courtroom at the exit door to encourage people to use personal hygiene protection (Hand sanitizer) regularly. In total, there will be ten (10) hand sanitizer stations, seven (7) trash containers and eight (8) tissue stations set up throughout the court's responsible areas for public use.

**6) Screening (How the court will ensure COVID-19 symptoms screening for all individuals entering the Nueces County Pet. 3 staff work areas, the judge's chambers, courtroom waiting lobby and courtroom)**

Before anyone can enter behind the doors into either one of the two staff members work areas, judge's chambers, courtroom waiting lobby area and courtroom, they will have their temperature taken with a non-contact infrared thermometer at the window of a staff member by the staff member. Anyone with a body temperature of 100 degrees or higher will not be permitted to enter any of the above-mentioned areas. They will be asked to leave the county annex building and encouraged to contact their physician and/or the Health Department at (361) 826-7200 Option 2 for guidance. They will be given a check off form with COVID-19 symptom's questions with the following: (1). Have you tested positive for COVID-19 or COVID-19 antibodies? (2). Have you been cleared of COVID-19 by a medical professional? (3). Have you recently travelled to a known COVID-19 hot spot in the last 15 days? (4). Do you have a new or worsening cough? (5). Do you currently have shortness of breath? (6). Do you currently have difficulty breathing? (7). Do you currently have chills? (8). Do you currently have repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain and headache? (9). Do you currently have a sore throat, loss of taste or smell or diarrhea? (10). Have you had any close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 (11). When did you have contact with a confirmed COVID-19 person? (12). Are you currently under a doctor's care for any COVID-19 symptoms? Anyone that answers "Yes" to any of the questions will not be permitted to enter any of the above-mentioned areas. They will be asked to leave the county annex and encouraged to contact their physician and/or the Health Department (361-826-7200 Option 2) for guidance. Anyone refusing to have their temperature taken or answer the COVID-19 questionnaire will not be permitted entry to any of the above-mentioned areas and will be asked to leave the county annex building. Anyone refusing to leave the county annex building will be

escorted out of the building by law enforcement personnel. If they are scheduled for a hearing I trial, it will immediately be cancelled and reset for a later date. If a person's body temperature is normal and all of the COVID-19 questions are answered "No" and the person is allowed entry to any of the above-mentioned areas and it is determined or learned after the person has left any of the above-mentioned areas that the person did unknowingly have any of the above COVID-19 symptoms, anyone including Nueces County Pet. 3 Justice of the Peace Judge and staff members, law enforcement, attorneys and the public members who had direct contact with the individual will be notified and asked to contact their physician and/or the Nueces County Health Department at (361) 826-7200 Option 2 for guidance. If the judge or his staff had direct contact with that person, they will immediately be sent home and asked to contact their physician and/or the Health Department at (361) 826-7200 Option 2 for guidance. The judge will contact the Nueces County Human Resources Department for employee compensation guidance.

**7) Face Coverings (How the court will ensure face coverings over the nose and mouth are worn)**

Everyone including but not limited to prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses and visitors will be required to wear a face mask designed to cover the nose and mouth at all times while inside the work stations of the office staff, judge's chambers, courtroom waiting lobby and courtroom. If a person does not have a personal facemask available to them, a disposable face mask will be provided to them by the court. If a person refuses to wear a face mask while in any of the above-mentioned areas, they will be asked to leave the county annex building. If a person refuses to leave the county annex building after being asked to do so by the judge or a judge's staff member, that person will be escorted out of the county annex building by law enforcement personnel. If the person refusing to wear a face mask is on the premises for a scheduled hearing or trial, it will immediately be cancelled and rescheduled for a later date.

**8) Cleaning (How the court will ensure frequent and appropriate cleaning of surfaces in and around the courtroom and common areas)**

Prior to conducting any hearing or trial, arraignments will be made by the judge or a judge's staff member for the onsite county building custodian to thoroughly clean and sanitize the annex building entrance area, the main annex building hallway, the chairs and any table within the hallway, the court staff members window areas, the courtroom waiting lobby and all chairs within that area, the courtroom waiting lobby men's and women's restrooms and the courtroom table tops, chairs and doorknobs. The custodian will ensure that all of the previously mentions hand sanitizer stations are readily available, the trash containers previously mentioned are empty and readily available and tissues at the previously mentioned areas are readily available for use. If there are more than one (1) hearing or trial scheduled back to back on the same date, there will be a ten (10) minute interval between each hearing or trial for the county annex onsite custodian to clean, sanitize and empty the waste containers in all of the above mentioned areas prior to the start of the next scheduled hearing or trial. At the end of the last hearing or trial of the day, the county annex onsite custodian will thoroughly clean, sanitize and empty the waste containers throughout the entire county annex building. If the county annex onsite custodian is scheduled to be off on a day a hearing or trail is to take place, the judge or a member of his staff will contact the Nueces County Public Works Director and make arraignments for another county custodian to be present that date.

Judge Larry L. Lawrence  
*Larry L. Lawrence*  
Nueces County Pet. 3  
Justice of the Peace

**NUECES COUNTY PRECINCT 3**

**JUSTICE OF THE PEACE**

**COVID-19 HEALTH & SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE**

For the health and safety of you and your family and everyone else including the Nueces County Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace court judge and staff members of this court or officers of the court that you may come in contact with during your visit trial or hearing~ we ask that you read each question carefully and answer truthfully to the best of your knowledge. Once you have circled an answer to every question~ return this questionnaire to one of the front office staff members.

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1). Have you tested positive for COVID-19 or COVID-19 antibodies? YES / NO  
a. If YES, Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 2). Have you been cleared of COVID-19 by a medical professional? YES / NO  
a. If YES, Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 3). Have you recently travelled to a known COVID-19 hot spot in the last 15 days? YES / NO
- 4). Do you have a new or worsening cough? YES / NO
- 5). Do you currently have shortness of breath? YES / NO
- 6). Do you currently have difficulty breathing? YES / NO
- 7). Do you currently have chills? YES / NO
- 8). Do you currently have repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain and headache? YES / NO
- 9). Do you currently have a sore throat, loss of taste or smell or diarrhea? YES / NO
- 10). Have you had close contact with any person who is confirmed to have COVID-19? YES / NO
- 11). When did you have contact with a confirmed COVID-19 person?  
a. Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 12). Are you currently under a doctor's care for any COVID-19 symptoms? YES / NO

Judge Larry L. Lawrence  
*Larry L. Lawrence*  
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