

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Bulverde City 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 **the City of Bulverde** 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 presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and City Manager and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
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. 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 will not be permitted to enter the building and should seek medical advice.
3. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Protective Measures: 1. Court room seating will be arranged so that social distancing will be maintained at all times. 2. Protective barriers will be installed to separate Court personnel and participants in court proceedings. 3. Enhanced sanitation measures will be taken to ensure that all contact surfaces are disinfected or protected from infection prior to utilization by court personnel or participants. 4. Hand sanitizer will be provided to all staff and court participants.

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:

The Revised Court Schedule is as follows:

Rescheduled dates:

June 10<sup>th</sup> 9:00 A.M. -4:00 P.M.

June 15<sup>th</sup> 9:00 A.M. -4:00 P.M.

June 24<sup>th</sup> 9:00 A.M. -4:00 P.M.

July 8<sup>th</sup> 9:00 A.M. -4:00 P.M.

Regular Schedule:

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of ea month; 2:00 P.M. -5:00 P.M.

### **Vulnerable Populations**

1. Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with 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 in vulnerable populations of 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 court's website and in conspicuous locations around the court building (a copy of which is attached).
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by being eligible to participate in virtual court proceedings established to service vulnerable populations.

### **Social Distancing**

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court building will be required to maintain adequate social distancing 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 has been posted on each restroom door.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snackrooms, have been closed to the public.

### **Gallery**

5. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
6. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

### *Well*

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

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of elevators on each floor, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, Court Clerks 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 indicate yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court building.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, Court Bailiffs 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 facemasks.

### **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. Individuals who do not have face coverings will be permitted to reset their court date one time, in order to allow them to procure appropriate face coverings.
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. If a supply is unavailable, such individuals will be asked to wait outside of the court building, and will be contacted by staff when their presence in the court building is required.

### **Cleaning**

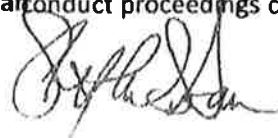
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 4 hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.

3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

**Other**

1. Only participants directly involved with court proceedings may enter the court building. For example, friends, family (except for minor children), or acquaintances of court participants will not be permitted to enter the court building.
2. In the event that the number of court participants exceeds the number of seats available inside the Court building to maintain social distancing protocols, the following actions will be taken:
  - a. Excess Participants will be required to register with the Court Clerk as an outside participant, and directed to wait outside the court building in a designated waiting area. Alternatively, Excess Participants may provide the Court Clerk with a cell phone number, and may wait in their vehicle in the Court parking lot.
  - b. When there is sufficient seating space for an outside participant to enter the court building, the Court Clerk or a Bailiff will exit the Court Building and retrieve the participant from the outside waiting area. If the participant has elected to provide a cell phone number and wait in their vehicle, the Court Clerk will call the participant and request that they return to the Courtroom.
  - c. In the event that an excess participant does not feel that they can remain in the outside waiting area or in their vehicle due to environmental factors (such as heat, cold, rain, etc.), the excess participant will be offered the option to be placed on the docket for one of the virtual court proceedings established for members of vulnerable populations.

I have attempted to confer with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and the City Manager, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.



Date: 5/18/2020

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Presiding Judge of Municipal Court



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Mayor, City of Bulverde

# **BULVERDE MUNICIPAL COURT**

## **NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

The following notice shall be posted on the Court's website, at the entrance to the Court and at the Court Clerk's window, and in all orders setting hearings, docket notices, and other communications

### **NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

The following are considered to be a member of Vulnerable Populations:

Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with 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.

Any person who is in a Vulnerable Population category may contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations, which will include the ability to participate in electronic or telephonic proceedings. If you do not have the technology to appear electronically or by telephone, the court will make accommodations for you at the court that will include the ability to so participate using equipment that will be sanitized between users. If you appear in person at the court, you will be required to wear a protective mask or one will be provided to you if you do not have one.



**BULVERDE MUNICIPAL COURT  
30360 Cougar Bend, Bulverde Texas 78163  
(830) 438-3612 fax (830) 438-4339**

The City of Bulverde is following the guidance of the CDC and may be conducting screening test before you enter any common area of the court.

All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times. Individuals are 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.

You are discouraged from bringing any other person with you unless it is a parent/guardian of a juvenile.

You will not be allowed into the court room until your assigned time. If court proceedings are running late court staff will provide a sign-in sheet for you. You will be notified to enter by a text/phone call you provide on the sign-in sheet.

Please understand that we are taking all precautions for you as well as our staff. Please refrain from entering City Hall if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Fever
- Sore Throat
- Body Aches
- Have been in contact with a known or suspected COVID-19 patient

If you have any of these symptoms, you will not be allowed in the court and your case will be rescheduled. If you have any of these symptoms within 14 days of your court setting, you should call the Municipal Court to advise the court of your condition and obtain a reset of your hearing date.

The Municipal Court is allowing defendants to dispose eligible cases by mail/email and fax. Contact the court no later than 24 hours before your court date to determine if your case is eligible for handling remotely.