

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the MUNICIPAL COURT 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 **MUNICIPAL COURT** 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 mayor and adjust 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: Sanitize and disinfect workplace, and social distancing.
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 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, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: daily questionnaire and monitoring temperature, wear face mask and provide hand sanitizer and surface disinfectant

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed all national holidays.
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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 courts' websites 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 scheduled appointments, over the phone conference calls.

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. 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.
3. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

4. 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.
5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

6. 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. 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.
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Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, Judge Scott, Eva Perez and Armida Garcia 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, Judge Scott, Eva Perez and Armida Garcia 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. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including mask and gloves.

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. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 1 hour.
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

All jury trials will be conducted in the Community Building located in Denver City on 15th street. This will allow for the proper mandated spacing of six feet between participants in the well, as well as in the gallery and jury panel. The building will only utilize one entrance and exit to allow for proper health screening and proper documentation, as per CDC guidelines. The bathroom capacities will be posted on each bathroom door. Face coverings will be MANDATORY, the court will provide one if needed. Hand sanitizer will be available, as well as tissues.

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 mayor, 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: _____

Local Administrative District Judge

Date: 5/28/20


Local Health Authority

Date: 5-28-20


City Mayor

OPEN

ONLY TWO PERSON'S PER PARTY

ONLY ONE DEFENDANT IN THE LOBBY AT
A TIME UNLESS CHILD ACCOMPANIED BY
PARENT

FACE COVERING REQUIRED AT ALL
TIMES

OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCING OF SIX
FEET

JUNE 1, 2020

COVID-19 PROCEDURES

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS, 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.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS WHO ARE SCHEDULED FOR COURT WILL BE ACCOMMODATED BY SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS, OVER THE PHONE CONFERENCE CALLS.

COURT TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 806-592-3963
