

**COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN FOR  
THE MUNICIPAL COURT,  
CITY OF ELECTRA, TEXAS**

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judge and other individuals entering the building housing the courts, the Municipal Court of the City of Electra, Texas will implement the following protective measures:

**General**

1. The Electra Municipal Court is located at 103 W. Cleveland Avenue in the City of Electra, Wichita County, Texas. The facility consists of a two-story, historic building with the municipal court located on the first floor. The court area includes a small foyer, the desk and workspace of the court administrator, an attached judge's chambers and a courtroom. Although the front foyer is connected by a single doorway to administrative offices located at 101 North Main, individuals appearing for municipal court access the building through the main entrance located on Cleveland Avenue. This Operating Plan shall apply to the entire court area used for municipal court purposes.
2. The Judge and staff 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.
3. While the Judge and staff will use all reasonable efforts to communicate remotely or electronically, remote participation in proceedings is not possible or practicable for the vast majority of this Court's participants; accordingly, all in-person proceedings shall be governed as set out herein.
4. The Court and staff will maintain regular communication with city officials and the Wichita County Public Health District, and will continuously adjust this Operating Plan as may be necessary in accordance with conditions in Wichita County, as well as rules and regulations enacted by city and/or county officials.
5. Non-essential in-person proceedings will be scheduled to commence no sooner than June 1, 2020.

**Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. The Judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. Monitoring requirements for the Judge and court staff shall consist of the following:
  - a. The judge and court staff will be screened before entrance to the court area in the same manner as all other participants.



4. Other persons whose appearance has been requested (e.g., witnesses or other participant) and is in the vulnerable population should notify the court administrator and, upon request, will be accommodated by either (a) rescheduling the appearance, (b) being excused from appearance, if appearance is deemed unnecessary by the City Attorney, and the Defendant or his or her attorney, or (c) appearing by electronic or telephonic means.

### **Social Distancing**

1. Public entry to the court area will be restricted to the main entrance located at 103 W. Cleveland Avenue.

2. Non-participants (such as family members, friends, children, and observers) will not be permitted in the court area, however, each juvenile defendant shall be accompanied by one parent or guardian.

3. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court area will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least six (6) feet.

4. There will be no public access to restrooms or breakrooms located in the court area while this Operating Plan remains in effect. Administrative offices, restrooms, and breakrooms adjacent to the court area will not be accessible to the public as the single doorway thereto shall remain closed while municipal court business is being conducted.

5. Rules governing the court room gallery shall be as follows:

a. The maximum number of persons permitted in the courtroom will have been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.

b. Seating in the courtroom will be arranged so as to provide appropriate social distancing so that rows, or individual seats, are separated by at least six (6) feet, and arranged to provide the safest environment. A separate seating area for the vulnerable population who elect to enter the courtroom shall be provided.

6. Rules governing the court room well shall be as follows:

a. Counsel tables, the witness stand, judge's bench and clerk, court reporter, and bailiff seating will be arranged to provide social distancing of at least six (6) feet in between each space.

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer will be placed at the sole public entrance to the court area and courtroom.

2. Tissues will be placed near the entrance to the courtroom, at counsel tables, the witness stand and on the judge's bench.

3. Guidelines by the Wichita County Public Health District and the Center for Disease Control will be posted at the sole public entrance to the court area.

### **Screening**

1. Admission to the office areas not used for court business, but adjacent thereto, will be governed by the policies and rules adopted by the City of Electra.

2. A bailiff or, if unavailable, a staff member will monitor the entrance to the court area, and will ask persons seeking admission 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. Persons who respond "yes" to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court area.

3. A bailiff or staff member will use an infrared thermometer, if available, to determine the temperature of the person seeking admission to the court area. Persons whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0° F will be refused admission to the court area.

4. Persons entering the court area will not be permitted to bring personal property other than identification, keys, and documents necessary for use during the proceeding.

5. A bailiff or staff member who is screening individuals entering the court area will use personal protective equipment to include, as a minimum, appropriate face covering and disposable gloves.

6. No inmates from the city or county jail shall be transported to or admitted into the court area while this Operating Plan remains in effect.

### **Face Coverings**

1. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings to court for their own personal use. The court will not provide face coverings or masks.

2. All individuals entering the court area will be asked to wear face coverings at all times. Persons who have no face covering, or who refuse to wear same, may be required to sit or stand in a separate area while participating in court proceedings or conducting court business.

3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court area for over one (1) hour, including the Judge and staff, will be required to wear, at a minimum, a non-medical grade face covering while in the court area.

### **Cleaning**

1. Building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the building at least every twenty-four (24) hours while court is in session.

2. Cleaning staff or court staff will clean the courtroom between every docket session, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. Cleaning staff will have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with Coronavirus.
4. Cleaning staff will have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.


**Other**

1. Participants, court staff, and any other attendee will be instructed to alert the court if the person has, or knows of another person present who has, COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms, or a fever, cough or sneezing.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have attempted to confer with the other city departments in the building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the Mayor of Electra and the local health authority, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that Judge and court staff covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

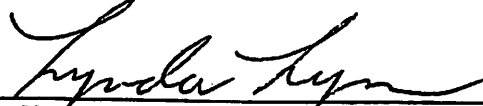
Signed this 27 day of May 2020.

  
Diane Dockery, Presiding Judge  
Municipal Court, City of Electra

**VERIFICATION OF CONSULTATION**

This is to verify that Diane Dockery, Municipal Court Judge for the City of Electra, has consulted me and discussed issues and means of implementation of measures to meet the requirements of the Office of Court Administration Guidelines, as appropriate to the operations and facilities of the Electra Municipal Court.

Signed this 26 day of May 2020.

  
The Honorable Lynda Lynn, Mayor

