

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Lake Worth Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of the Judge, Defendants, Attorneys, Court Staff, the Prosecutor, and other individuals entering the building housing the court, the Lake Worth 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 (minimum 6 feet), 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 city.
4. Subject to extension of existing Emergency Orders or additional guidance from the Office of Court Administration, Judge(s) 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: Staff members will be screened and required to complete the Employee Monitoring Form twice a day. The Judge, Prosecutor, and court staff will be screened and fill out a monitoring form before any in-person proceedings.
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, must notify their direct supervisor immediately and should seek medical advice.
4. Judges and court staff may but are not required to wear face coverings in non-public areas, shall practice social distancing, and shall always follow appropriate hygiene recommendations and current city policies. The Judge, Prosecutor and court staff shall wear protective face masks or will be provided sneeze shields while in the courtroom.
5. Protective Measures: Each customer service window has been outfitted with a large plex glass sneeze shield with limited open area above and below, masks or face coverings, sneeze shields, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizer will be available to staff in the courtroom and court office, 6-foot distancing, and twice a day health screening.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Only three people will be allowed in the City Hall lobby area at one time. All in-person proceedings will be held in the Council Chambers, hereafter referred to as the "court room," and will always be in

accordance with established social distancing allowing a maximum of 25 defendants in the court room at one time and no more than 3 people in the Prosecutor conference room at any time. Additional dockets will be added if needed.

2. Any person who does not have business before the court will not be allowed in the court room, except for one parent or guardian of a juvenile defendant. Defendants with small children that cannot be left alone will be asked to wait in their vehicle until the court room has been emptied or they will be allowed to reset their appearance date for a time when they may appear without small children.
3. All individuals shall practice social distancing (6 foot minimum spacing), whether in the court office, court room, the court room hallway, or outside the court room. Persons who fail to practice the social distancing guidelines in any of these areas may be asked to leave the premises.

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. The 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, on the bulletin board at the entrance of the court building and at the customer service windows (a copy of which is attached).
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by video conference or teleconference or will be rescheduled to a later date when in-person appearance is safe. Options will be explained to each person in the vulnerable population, regarding how they can dispose of their citation, that can be completed by mail, email, fax, or placed in the drop box in the court building if they so choose.

Social Distancing

1. All persons not from the same household who are in the court building will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.
2. Floor markers have been placed at the customer service windows and lobby to enforce the 6 feet distance.
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.

Courtroom Gallery

4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff/bailiff.
5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited and only individuals with court business will be allowed in the court room except for one parent or guardian of a juvenile defendant.

Courtroom Well

6. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk area, 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 and hand sanitizer have been placed near the main entrance of the court room, at counsel tables (when in use), at the witness stand (when in use), on the judge's bench, on the prosecutor's table, and outside of each customer service window in the court office.
2. Sneeze guards have been placed in front of the judge's bench, clerk's area, and prosecutor's table.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations of the court building.

Screening

Court Office

1. The following signage will be posted at the entrance of the court building: **DOT NO ENTER** if you are experiencing any of the following COVID-19 symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, fever or chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, or fatigue, or if you have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Call 817-237-1211 to discuss your options. **Facemasks are strongly encouraged in this building.**
2. The following signage will be posted at each customer service window in the court building: **ARE YOU EXPERIENCING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?** Cough, shortness of breath, fever or chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, or fatigue, or if you have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Each visitor will be asked to indicate a yes or no to the sign before being assisted.
3. Anyone who enters and appears to have COVID-19 symptoms or has indicated yes to any of the symptoms, will be required to leave and will be advised to contact the department they were attempting to visit.

Court Room

4. When individuals attempt to enter the court room, the court bailiff or a Lake Worth Police Officer will ask the individuals if they are have any of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, fever or chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, or fatigue. Individuals who indicate yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court room and their court date will be rescheduled.
5. All individuals entering the court room will have their temperature checked by the court bailiff or a Lake Worth Police Officer with an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the

individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 99.6°F will be refused admittance to the court room and their court date will be rescheduled.

6. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court room will be provided personal protective equipment, including facial coverings, gloves, hand sanitizer and tissues, and will be educated on the proper usage of personal protective equipment.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court room 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 as long as supplies are available.

Cleaning

1. Court staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least twice a day.
2. Court staff will clean the common areas of the courtroom before and after each in-person proceeding.
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.

I have consulted with the Lake Worth Emergency Management Coordinator, Ryan Arthur, the local health authority, Vinny Taneja, and Mayor Walter Bowen, documentation of which is attached to this plan. The Court Director will be responsible for implementing this plan throughout the building consistent with city directives and I will ensure that the in-person proceedings in the courtroom covered by this Operating Plan are conducted consistent with the plan.

Date: 6/2/2020



William "Bill" Lane
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

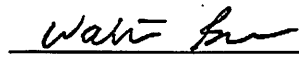
Reviewed by:

Date: 06/03/2020



Ryan Arthur
Emergency Management Coordinator

Date: 06/09/2020



Walter Bowen
Mayor, City of Lake Worth

Date: _____

Vinny Taneja
Director of Tarrant County Health Dept.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Attention Defendants

Due to COVID-19, you may be part of the vulnerable population. If you are older than 65 years of age, have a serious underlying health condition, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, or have a compromised immune system due to chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy, you are considered to be in the vulnerable population. Contact the Municipal Court and speak to a clerk regarding special accommodations, alternative appearances, or a reset date for a specialized docket to ensure your continued safety.

Phone: 817-255-7911

Fax: 817-237-1333

Email: court@lakeworthtx.org

Website: lakeworthtx.org