

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Stagecoach Municipal Court

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 Municipal Court of the City of Stagecoach will implement the following protective measures:

General

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.

The presiding judge will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.

The presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and Mayor to adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.

The Court will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020.

Judge and Court Staff Health

Any court staff who feels 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.

The Judge and court staff will practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.

Protective Measures include pre-screening, requiring facemasks, frequent hand washing and sanitizing between cases.

Scheduling

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

The court has Zoom remote teleconferencing available for those who do not wish to appear at the court for the duration of the pandemic.

In person appearance dockets have been suspended as ordered by the Texas Supreme Court until June 1, 2020. Beginning in June, we will conduct appearance dockets. Clerks will maintain social distancing requirements at all times between themselves and defendants.

The court will utilize telephone calls, emails, mail, and fax when possible.

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.

A notice with this information will be posted on the courts' website and in conspicuous locations around the court building.

Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by remote hearings where possible, individual hearings when necessary.

Social Distancing

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.

Only one case will be allowed into the building at a time. No more than two people from the same household will be allowed in the building at a time.

Hygiene

Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrance to the building and in the hallway to the building.

Tissues have been placed at the entrance to the building and in the hallway to the building.

The Department of State Health Service "Stop the Spread of Germs" flyer has been posted near the entrance to the building, inside the hallway to the building, and in each bathroom.

Court staff has been provided with cleaning supplies to be effective against the coronavirus, and will clean court areas between each case. Common areas of the building have been closed to the public.

Screening

When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the bailiff or court staff will ask each individual 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 building.

City staff that is screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including masks and gloves.

Face Coverings

Individuals will be required to wear face coverings while in the court building. If the individual does not have a face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided as supplies are available.

In developing this plan, we consulted with the City Mayor, Court Clerk, as well as Judges of other courts. We will ensure that all court staff will conduct proceedings consistent with this Operating Plan.

Date: May 28, 2020



Carolyn Cox, Presiding Judge



Brenda Rutt, Court Clerk

 June 29, 2020