

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Rowlett City Judiciary RECERTIFICATION – January 1, 2021

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 court of **Rowlett** 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 must continue to 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. Judges are not permitted to hold in-person proceedings in any matter unless the trial judge has used all reasonable efforts to conduct the proceeding remotely.
5. The court shall consider the following objective criteria in determining whether to permit an in-person proceeding in the court: 1) whether a party to the proceeding has access to the Internet or hardware (laptop, desktop, iPad, smart phone, etc.) to participate remotely; 2) whether the participant is incapable to utilize remote/virtual court proceeding platforms due to infirmity, language barrier, disability, or otherwise; 3) whether the proceeding must be conducted immediately or can be delayed/postponed to a later date without disadvantage to any party; and 4) any criteria the Office of Court Administration may promulgate that are in addition to the ones provided here.

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:
 - A. Each municipal court employee, judge, and other person entering court facilities shall be required to complete the Employee Health Monitoring questionnaire upon entry. Court facilities include the clerks' office and the courtroom.
 - B. Employees, judges, and any other persons entering court facilities must have their temperature taken upon initial arrival at court facilities. Court facilities include the clerks' office and the courtroom. (Refer to Item #3 below.)
 - C. Infrared thermometers shall be used for employee screenings. Screeners may confirm readings with thermometers with probe covers, if needed.

- D. The City Marshal or a Deputy City Marshal shall ensure each staff member is screened and results are documented prior to the beginning of each shift. If a staff member has a positive screening, the Court Administrator and Presiding Judge shall be notified.
- E. Employees sent home shall not return to work until cleared by their primary care physician.
3. Judges, court staff, or any other person performing their job function at court facilities 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 court facilities and should seek medical advice.
4. Judges, court staff, and any other person performing their job function within municipal court facilities will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
5. Protective Measures: Court staff must wear masks and gloves when interacting with the public. Court staff must use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) immediately after each interaction with any member of the public. Court staff must also use hand sanitizer after handling each piece of mail.

Maximum Number of Persons

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: No more than fourteen (14) court users (defendants, witnesses, member of the public) will be allowed in the gallery of the courtroom at one time. Court users will be provided a phone number (972-412-6222) to call the court when they arrive in the parking lot. Court staff will inquire how many persons will be entering the courtroom. Once space is available, court staff will contact the court user via phone and direct them to enter the building. If a court user does not have a phone, that person should check-in at the court window, and that person will be provided a place to wait to be called into the courtroom that is a distance of at least six feet from all other persons.

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 having their court date rescheduled or having their case heard through remote capabilities.

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 snack rooms, 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. A maximum of fourteen (14) persons will be allowed in the seating area of the gallery.

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, the City Marshal or Deputy City Marshal 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, the City Marshal or Deputy City Marshal 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 masks 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

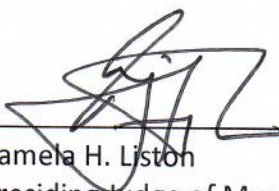
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every four hours during business hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the 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.

Jury Trials

In-person jury trials are not being held in the Rowlett Municipal Court, and none are contemplated until the high risk of coronavirus infection has passed. The Rowlett Municipal Court will begin holding jury trials remotely on February 4, 2021.

I have attempted to confer with all judges of the Rowlett Municipal Court 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 the Rowlett Municipal Court conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 12/30/2020



Pamela H. Ljston
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court
Rowlett Municipal Court

To: The Honorable Judge Pam Liston

From: Cyrus Timothy Lambert, MD, Health Authority for the City of Rowlett, Texas

Date: December 30, 2020

Re: Rowlett Municipal Court COVID-19 Operating Plan Recertification

I have reviewed the original COVID-19 operating plan and the updated 2021 COVID-19 operating plan for the City of Rowlett Municipal Courts. It is my opinion that the plan provided sufficient protection for the litigants, Court staff and court visitors from COVID-19. Please consider this my approval of the submitted plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cyrus Lambert MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cyrus Timothy Lambert, MD

Health Authority for the City of Rowlett, Texas

**NOTICE TO SENIORS
AND PERSONS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS
PLACING THEM AT A HIGHER RISK FOR
COVID-19**

Seniors and those with higher-risk medical conditions regarding COVID-19 should not appear in person. Contact the court at 972-412-6222 or court@rowlett.com to make safe arrangements for resolution of your case.

Coronavirus Disease 2019

COVID-19

Patients with COVID-19 report mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms can include:

Fever



Cough



Shortness
of breath



- Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.
- Seniors and those with medical conditions are at higher risk and should pay extra attention for these symptoms.
- If you have these symptoms visit dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus for instructions on what to do.

COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

updated 03/11/20
8:35 am

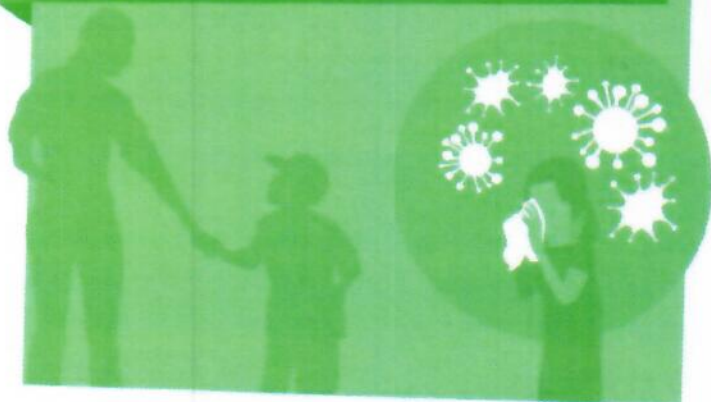
For updates and more information, visit dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus

COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

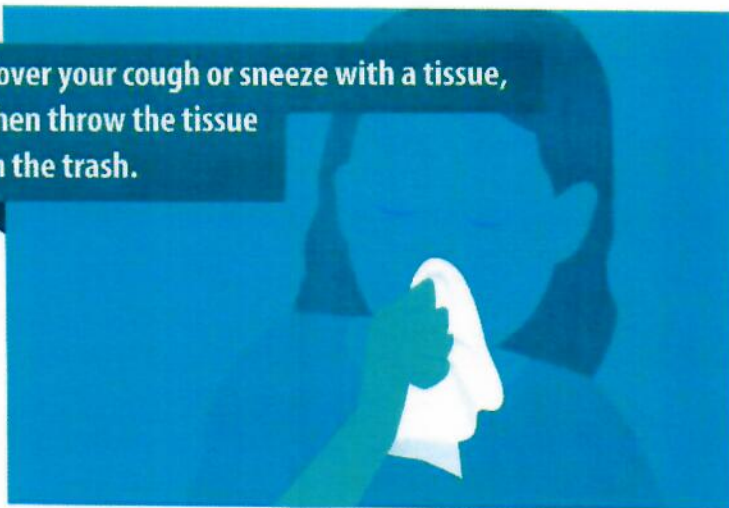
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

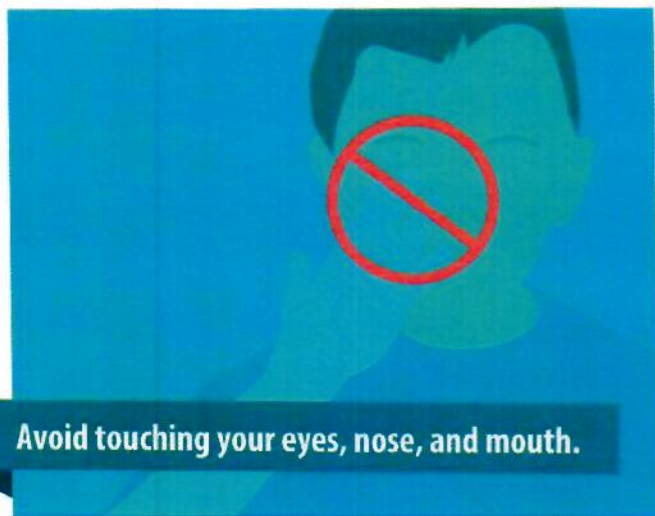
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



TEXAS
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Texas Department of State
Health Services

For more information: dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus