

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Bay City Municipal Court City 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 **Bay City** 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 city.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than July 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: temperatures will be taken daily prior to entering the municipal court facilities; any and all concerns with health symptoms will be addressed immediately and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the guidelines and precautions of COVID 19.
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 as outlined in this plan, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
5. Protective Measures: all areas will be wiped with appropriate sanitation solutions no less than each hour including door handles, and the outside customer service area. Hand sanitizer will be available at numerous work areas. Frequent hand washing with hot water and soap for no less than 20 seconds when necessary and wearing of latex gloves are required when handling any and all currency or papers received by public.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Show cause hearings to be held outside of courtroom (behind glass in front foyer) if possible. Court dates to be scheduled possibly beginning after July 1, 2020. Court appearances will be scheduled with no more than 7 litigants per hour and no one other than the defendant and/or his /her attorney present in the courtroom. A maximum of 10 people outside staff, including the judge in the courtroom at one time. This will include 1 clerk, the judge, a bailiff, and the prosecutor.

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 utilizing email or mailing appropriate paperwork to the defendants for possible resolution to the charges filed.

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. One restroom has been designated for public use and has the capacity for one person allowed at a time.
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. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the lobby entrance, inside the court room and at the entry of City Prosecutor's office.
2. Tissues have been placed at the lobby entrance, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, inside the court room at sanitation station and at the entry to the City Prosecutor's office.
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, a clerk or the bailiff 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, a clerk or the bailiff will use 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 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 appropriate mask and latex 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.
4. Court staff will wear face coverings when moving throughout the office, when waiting on the public, during court proceedings and when completing health screenings for access to the courthouse.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least 3 times weekly, with court staff cleaning between hearings and frequently throughout the day.
2. Court 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/regular court staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.

4. Court building cleaning staff/regular court staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

All outside doors will be wiped down including the door handles of all inside doors the public has access to periodically, but within every hour to 2 hours. Air filters will be changed regularly every 30 days. Vents will be cleaned on a weekly basis. Floors, countertops, desks and other areas will be steamed weekly or sooner as a steamer cleans 99.9 percent of germs.

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 county judge 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: 5/15/2020

Suzan Thompson

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

Date: 5/29/2020



Mayor City of Bay City

Date:

Dr. Neret

Other

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Date: 5/15/2020

_____ *Suzan Thompson* _____
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

Date: _____

_____ *[Signature]* _____
Mayor City of Bay City

Date: 9/27/2020

_____ *MICHAEL NERET MD* _____
Dr. Neret