



COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Belton 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 Belton, Texas**, 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 to adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. The presiding judge of the municipal court will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than July 2, 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 will individually self-monitor with the following requirements: Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.0°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.
3. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
4. Protective Measures: Judges and court staff will continue in the practice of social distancing, maintain frequent handwashing, avoid touching of face and frequent disinfecting of objects and surfaces touched.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
 - A. In-person proceedings will be held every Thursday of the seven-day (7) week.
 - B. In-person proceedings will be coordinated in half-hour (30 minute) intervals.

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 the court upon exercising contact with the court personnel for options to address the citation/case without entering a court facility.

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 from the same household will be permitted in the court building.
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, have been closed to the public.

Lobby

5. The maximum number of persons permitted in the lobby of the court building, including court personnel, has been determined at no more than ten (10) persons and posted. The maximum capacity of the lobby will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
6. The lobby of the court building has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Courtroom

7. In the courtroom, the counsel tables, judge's bench, clerk, and bailiff seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.
8. The maximum number of persons permitted in the courtroom of the court building, including court personnel, has been determined at no more than ten (10) persons and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by the bailiff.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, inside the lobby, inside the courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, 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 of the court building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the court personnel 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 court personnel 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. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including face coverings and gloves.

Face Coverings

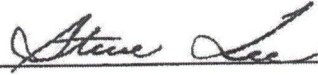
1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.
3. Individuals who will be 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

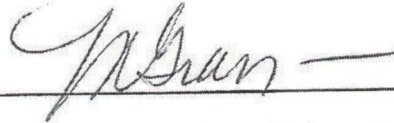
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every four (4) hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. 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.

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 court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/11/2020

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Lee", written above a horizontal line.

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marion Grayson", written above a horizontal line.

Marion Grayson, City of Belton Mayor



City of Belton

Municipal Court

May 8, 2020

PUBLIC NOTICE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Belton Municipal Court continues to reschedule defendants and witnesses set for a hearing or trial through June 2020. Those affected will receive written notice from the Court advising of the new hearing or trial date.

Those who have pending citations or cases, as well as witness awaiting notification, are encouraged to do the following:

1. Please review the options located on the back of the paper citation and visit www.beltontexas.gov/court.
2. Visit www.beltontexas.gov/court or call 254-933-5838 on weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (In many instances citations can be rectified online or through the mail without having to appear in person).
3. Those who believe they are sick, have been exposed to someone who is sick, or are member of a high-risk group, as identified by the Center for Disease Control, please exercise the following options to address a citation or case without entering a court facility:
 - a. Visit www.beltontexas.gov/court and use the online service.
 - b. For payments or documents, use the drop-box located in the drive-through at 100 S. Davis St., Belton.
 - c. Call 254-933-5838 to discuss court options.
 - d. Witness notification please call 254-933-5838.
 - e. To request the resetting of a court date or payment plan email court@beltontexas.gov or fax 254-933-5859.
 - a. Email and faxes must include the following information typewritten or legibly printed: name, address, DOB, phone, email address and citation/case number (if known). In addition, include an explanation why a reset or change in payment plan is necessary. A Judge will review the submittals and notify the requestors of any decision.