

**City of Brookside Village
COVID-19 Operating Plan
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 courts of the **City of Brookside Village 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, 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 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: the court will take regular temperature checks with infrared thermometer and ensure that no staff member has any illness 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 and should seek medical advice.
4. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: The court has sneeze guards to be used by the court staff, judge, and prosecutor during all in person proceedings. The court staff, judge and prosecutor will wear facial coverings, and will be provided individual sanitizers and will be social distanced during in court proceedings from each other and from the public.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: After June 1, 2020, the court will have in person dockets with no more than 25 individuals scheduled at each time. *Additionally, the court will be scheduling virtual dockets to accommodate those that have the capability to participate in virtual court or are in the vulnerable population or do not feel comfortable attending in person court proceedings.*

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 being provided the opportunity to appear for virtual court proceedings.* If those individuals are unable to appear by virtual court, the court will make other accommodations as necessary.

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. The chairs have been moved to provide only 25 for the public. The distance between each chair will be no less than six feet apart. Additionally, no individuals other than those on the docket will be allowed in the court room. Defendants will be seen on a first come first serve basis. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

7. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and 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.

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. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be available at the bench when individuals will be signing documents for court.
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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. Additionally, tissues will be available at the bench when individuals will be signing documents for court.
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 room, the court 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 room, the court bailiff 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 room.
3. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building 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.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court room 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 room 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.
2. Court room cleaning staff has been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
3. Court room cleaning staff has been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

I consulted with the local health authority and Mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with court rooms in the court building covered by this operating plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/28/20



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court