

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Bryan Municipal Court, Bryan, TX

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 **Bryan 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 the presiding judge will 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 Presiding Judge, Court Administrator and Marshal will hold regular meetings.
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 wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations pursuant to state and city policies.
5. Protective Measures: face coverings, disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizers will be provided to staff.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
 1. Court visitors shall enter from one designated door for entry and exit from one designated door.
 2. There are 6 individual booths with glass panel between a clerk and court visitors; however no more than 3 booths will be occupied at one time; there will be one booth empty between occupied booths; customer will be asked to have no more than one person accompanying customer.

3. There will be no more than 4 individuals standing in line in lobby of courthouse. Markings are placed in lobby specifying 6 feet spacing between individuals standing in line.
4. All other court visitors will be asked to remain outside of courthouse until space is available in lobby.
5. No more than 4 individuals shall occupy the courtroom for scheduled in-person hearing. Each person shall remain separated throughout the courtroom. No more than two individuals shall appear at the bench. The judge and individuals will remain 6 feet apart while discussing case with judge at the bench.
6. The marshal's office personnel will monitor the number of people in lobby and courtroom.

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.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated having the individual call the Clerk's office in advance and schedule an appearance by remote means if possible.

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. 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.
3. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, will be monitored and subject to regular disinfecting.

Gallery

4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. The gallery of the courtroom when open will be 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. Bottles of hand sanitizers have been made available to all staff members and are available at booths.
2. Tissues will be placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.
3. Appropriate notices for washing hands has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the courthouse, they will be monitored by marshals of the court. When possible, the 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. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will inform the marshal's office if an individual is showing any signs listed above. If so, marshal will ask the questions listed above and marshal will wear protective equipment.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be encouraged to wear face coverings pursuant to state and city guidelines.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every day.
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 informed on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

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 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: 5/19/2020



Albert Navarro

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

