

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Chandler 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 court, the court of the City of Chandler, Texas, will implement the following protective measures:

General

- 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.
- All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
- 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.
- Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020.

Judge and Court Staff Health

- Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
- Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Courthouse Security Personnel will continue screening all persons entering court buildings, including Judge and Court Staff, as set out below.
- 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.
- Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
- Protective Measures: The number of persons entering court buildings will be limited, screened and attired as set out herein. And, the Court has a window to divide when court starts non-essential in-person proceedings.

Scheduling

- The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:

- There will be appointments scheduled or teleconferencing will be an option.
- There will be only three (3) persons allowed in the lobby at the courtroom window at a time, with exceptions such as juveniles attending with a parent/guardian, as well as attorneys.
- The courtroom will be limited to ten (10) at a time to ensure there is adequate room to practice social distancing.
- There will be no jury trials scheduled until after August 2020.

Vulnerable Populations

- 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.
- 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).
- The court will provide accommodations by setting specific times for only the individual to be seen and a sanitized area to meet. The sanitized area will be sanitized between each defendant.

Social Distancing

- 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.
- No more than two individuals from the same household will be permitted in the lobby.
- 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.
- Public common areas, including the break room, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

- 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.

- The gallery of the courtroom will be marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.
- In the 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

- Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building and outside of the courtroom.
- 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.
- The Department of State Health Service's "*Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer*" has been posted in multiple locations of the court building.

Screening

- When individuals attempt to enter the court building, an appointed person 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.
- When individuals attempt to enter the court building, an appointed person 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.
- Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including surgical masks and gloves.

Face Coverings

- All individuals entering the courtrooms will be required to wear face coverings at all times, except when participating as an attorney or member of attorney's staff, party, or witness.
- 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 if the supply is available.

Cleaning

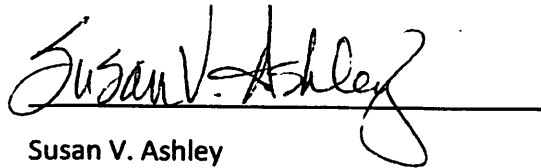
- Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every day.
- Court building cleaning staff will clean and sanitize counters, surfaces, glass partitions, door handles, and chairs after each individual appointment, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used. Counsel, parties, and witnesses will be required to sanitize their hands prior to being seated in the courtroom.
- Court staff will clean the court window hourly.
- Court building cleaning staff will be provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
- Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

- Bailiffs and Court staff will continuously monitor and ensure all persons entering the building or courtroom wear a face covering and abide by the 6 feet social distancing requirement.
- Gloves, anti-bacterial spray, and alcohol wipes will be available for court staff use.

In developing the plan, I consulted with the City's local health authority and the Mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that all court staff in the court covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Signed on June 4, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan V. Ashley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

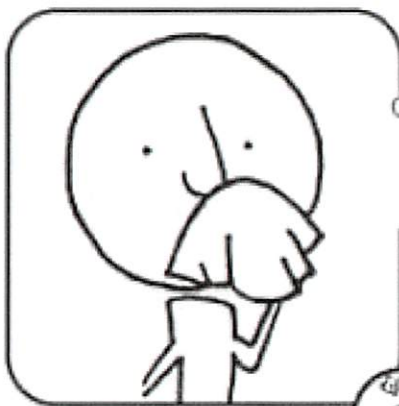
Susan V. Ashley
Presiding Judge
City of Chandler Municipal Court

COVID – 19 NOTICE

Please contact the court to make other arrangements for a hearing if you are over 65 or have 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.

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

Cover your Cough



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze

or
cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

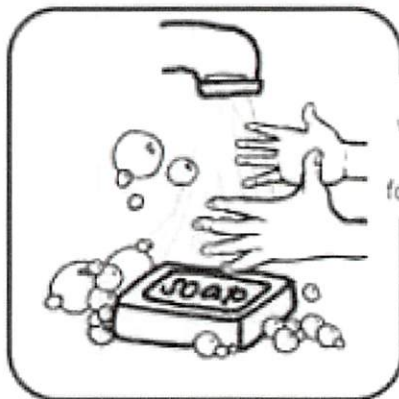


Put your used tissue in the waste basket



Clean your Hands

after coughing or sneezing.



Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds

or
clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.

