

Combine Municipal Court

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COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Combine Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the building housing the court, and the fact that the City of Combine does not provide the Presiding Judge with, nor does the court staff have, the technology to conduct remote hearings, the **City of Combine** will implement the following protective measures:

General

1. The judge 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. This court does not have the capability to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and county judge, and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. The judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 9, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. The judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. The judge 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.
3. The judge and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: There is only one judge conducting proceedings in this building. Court is held every other month with less than ten (10) people in the building at one time.

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.

1. The judge will include information on orders setting hearings, docket 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 court's website and in conspicuous locations around the court building (a copy of which is attached).
2. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by giving them a specific appointment time to appear.

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. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

3. The gallery of our courtroom is a multipurpose area. It is used for city hall daily business activities and monthly city council meetings.
4. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing and seating is limited to every other row.

Well

5. The courtroom, defendant/witness stand, 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.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer and tissues have been placed at the entrance to the building.
2. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations in the court building.

Screening

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

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.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 4 hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom 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 this plan, I consulted with the local health authority and county judge, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that this court will conduct proceedings consistent with this Operating Plan.

Date: 1/4/2021



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court