

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Corrigan, Texas

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 Corrigan 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 and keep updated on 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 10, 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 and Court Administrator will hold weekly 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 be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations and current city policies at all times.
5. Protective Measures: Masks and disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be provided to staff.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: All hearings will occur remotely and any hearings that are in person will always be in established social distancing along with plexiglass providing separation as well in the front lobby, payment plan rooms, the court bailiff at the entrance and the prosecutor conference room.

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 by remote means.

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. If there is any concern, the court will have the ability to use a thermal thermometer to check anyone's temperature coming into the court in a safe manner.
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, have been closed to the public and will not be used by staff to share coffee, food or meetings.

Gallery

4. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. The gallery of the courtroom when open and the front lobby have been 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. 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. Hand Sanitizer will be available upon or allowance to wash hands in restroom.

Screening

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

3. If there is any concern, the court will have the ability to use a thermal thermometer to check anyone's temperature coming into the court in a safe manner.
4. Screening should be a thermal temperature on all individuals entering the court building. Those with 99.6 or greater asked not to enter. These thermometers are easy to use. Once screened stickers shall be used on people entering. The Screener would review the questions, and take the temperature then write it down on a sticker and give it to the person to place on his chest area. It's a clear marker and anyone can quickly see that everyone has been screened properly.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will wear face coverings at all times and their time in the court building will be monitored.

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 have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.
4. Anytime there is a new set of people touching something or the same set but who left the building and are returning, the things they touch should be cleaned. For example, a new set of jurors. Or employee's workspace after leaving the office to go to lunch.

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: 6/1/2020

_____ L.W. Yankie _____

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court


6/2/2020