

COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN FOR THE CITY OF CORSICANA MUNICIPAL COURT

(As mandated by the Texas Supreme Court and Office of Court Administration)

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of all persons involved with or appearing before the City of Corsicana Municipal Court (henceforth, "the Court"), the Presiding Judge of the Court hereby issues the following orders in response to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic:

General

1. The Judge and Court staff will comply with all Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, including conducting in-person proceedings according to the guidance issued by the Office of Court Administration (henceforth, "OCA") regarding social distancing, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions.
2. The Judge will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely, and will only hold in-person proceedings when remote proceedings are not feasible or allowed by the OCA.
3. The Court will make reasonable accommodations for individuals who are not able to participate in remote proceedings. These accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis, but may include providing the individual with access to a sanitized computer with access to the remote proceedings, conducting a hearing over conference call pursuant to OCA guidelines, or rescheduling the individual's hearing for a later time.
4. The Judge will regularly consult with the Local Health Authority (henceforth, "LHA") and adjust this Operating Plan as recommended by the LHA to respond to changing public health needs.
5. The Judge will not begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings sooner than August 1, 2020.

Judge and Court Staff Health

6. The Judge and Court staff will take their temperature immediately upon entering the Court building. If the Judge or Court staff feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.6° Fahrenheit, they must immediately leave and notify the Court Clerk or Judge (in the event the Clerk herself is ill) of their fever.

7. The Judge and Court staff must further report any new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19, including but not limited to, persistent cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, unusual muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, or having had known close contact with a person who is confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19.
8. When away from their office or workstations, or when around others, the Judge and Court staff will properly wear face masks, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations.
9. The Judge and Court staff will, when feasible and if approved by the Corsicana City Manager, work remotely.

Scheduling

10. As stated in Order 2, above, the Court's preference will be to hold remote hearings whenever possible. However, when in-person hearings are necessary, the Court will schedule no more than 20 cases to appear during any given day, in order to reduce the number of individuals in the Court building. The Court's Clerk will, to the best of her ability, stagger appearance times (e.g., Defendant 1 shall appear at 8:30 am, Defendant 2 at 8:45 am, etc.).
11. No persons will be allowed in the courtroom unless they have business before the Court. Exceptions will be made for parents/guardians of juveniles, as well as attorneys.
12. Jail inmates will appear before the Court remotely, and bench warrants to bring an inmate physically before the Court shall not issue absent special circumstances.

Screening, Social Distancing, Hygiene, Face Coverings

13. All persons appearing in-person before the Court (including those waiting for a case to be called) will practice social distancing, properly wear face masks, and wash or sanitize their hands prior to entering the courtroom. The Court will provide masks and access to soap/water or hand sanitizer for those individuals who do not have access. Individuals who fail to comply will be ordered to leave and their cases will be rescheduled for a later date.
14. All persons appearing in-person before the Court shall be offered the option to leave their phone number with the Court's bailiff or staff, and wait outside or in

their car until their case is called, if the Court is not ready to proceed with their case at the time the person arrives. The Court's bailiff or staff shall, at the time the case is called, attempt to contact the person at the number they provided.

15. All persons appearing in-person before the Court will have their temperature taken by the Court's bailiff prior to entering the courtroom. Individuals who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.6° Fahrenheit will be denied entry to the courtroom, and their cases shall be reset without penalty to them.
16. All persons appearing in-person before the Court will be asked screening questions about COVID-19 signs and symptoms. If a person has a COVID-19 sign or symptom, they will be denied entry to the courtroom, and their cases shall be reset without penalty to them. Until the OCA issues a screening questionnaire, the Court will use the screening questionnaire that has been issued by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards¹.
17. The Court bailiff will be provided with protective gloves, a no-touch thermometer, and a face mask approved by the LHA for use during screenings, and shall utilize the same.
18. All persons in the courtroom during an in-person proceeding will remain at least 6 feet apart, except brief instances when it is necessary to exchange documents, evidence, or other items. The courtroom's tables and seating will be arraigned to ensure proper social distancing.

Cleaning

19. Prior to any in-person Court function, City of Corsicana janitorial or maintenance staff will clean the courtroom, utilizing cleaning supplies and techniques appropriate to kill COVID-19. If the courtroom is not cleaned in accordance with this order, the Court's docket shall be cancelled.

Vulnerable Populations

20. The Court will include information on all docket notices, orders setting hearings, subpoenas, and other communications summoning persons to come before the Court that states that individuals who have a heightened risk of contracting COVID-19 should contact the Court and inform the Court of that fact.

¹ https://www.tcjs.state.tx.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19_Inmate_Screening_Form.pdf

21. The Court will make reasonable accommodations to individuals with a heightened risk of contracting COVID-19 on a case-by-case basis. When necessary, the Judge will consult with the LHA concerning how to accommodate an individual safely.

Miscellaneous

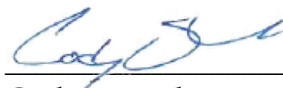
22. The Department of State Health Service’s “Stop the Spread of Germs” flyer will be posted at the entrance to the Court’s lobby.

23. A sign urging individuals who are feverish or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms to call the Court to conduct their business instead of entering the Court’s lobby will be posted at the entrance to the Court’s lobby.

24. The Court’s staff will immediately notify the City Manager and Corsicana Fire Rescue if they believe an individual displaying or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms comes into the Court’s lobby. That individual may be required to leave the Court’s lobby area if Corsicana Fire Rescue believes the individual may be ill.

In developing this plan, I consulted with the Local Health Authority for the City of Corsicana and Navarro County, Dr. Kent Rogers. I will ensure that all Court staff and other individuals covered by this operating plan follow it.

So ordered on June 26, 2020.



Cody Beauchamp
Presiding Judge
City of Corsicana Municipal Court

Acknowledged/Consulted:

See attached email.

Don Denbow
Mayor
City of Corsicana

See attached email.

Dr. Kent Rogers, MD
Local Health Authority
City of Corsicana & Navarro County