

# **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Municipal Court of Dalworthington Gardens, Tarrant County**

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 Municipal Court of Dalworthington Gardens 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 county judge 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 2, 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 clerk shall meet weekly, or as often as necessary, to address concerns and reassess the COVID-19 operating plan.
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 in public areas including the courtroom, always practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: hand sanitizer and wipes will be provided to the staff

## **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: All dockets and hearings will be available remotely and any hearings that are in person will always be in accordance with established social distancing guidelines. Guidelines from the Office of Court Administration, as mandated by the Texas Supreme Court and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, as well as county and city policies shall be followed.

### **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. All persons are to wear face masks or face coverings.
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 hallways and meeting rooms, have been closed to the public and will not be used except as necessary to access scheduled hearings and meetings.

### ***Gallery***

4. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to individual seats spaced at least 6 feet apart.

### ***Well***

6. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and 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. 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. Hand sanitizer will be available in each area.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom, court staff 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.

### Face Coverings

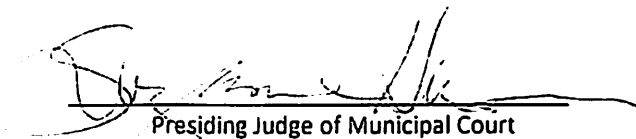
1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.

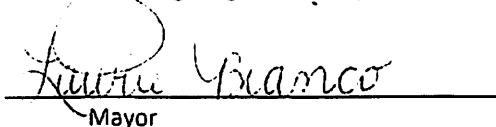
### Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned prior to any court proceedings.
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.

I have attempted to confer with city officials, including the City Administrator/ City Secretary, regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation and guidelines from the Office of Court Administration 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: 5/29/2020

  
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Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

  
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Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Administrator/City Secretary

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Local Health Authority  
Dr. Catherine A. Colquitt