

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Double Oak Municipal Court**

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorney, visitors, court staff, judges and other individuals entering the building housing the court, the Double Oak 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 the local health authority and mayor and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the town.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than July 1, 2020.

### **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: self check of temperature and symptoms at the beginning of the work day and when necessary.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.0F, 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 pass the self check station 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 at all appropriate times.
5. Protective Measures:
  - a. Doors will remain propped open during operating hours to avoid touching door handles;
  - b. Staff will be required, and visitors will be strongly encouraged to sanitize their hands and wear masks upon entry;
  - c. A one way flow for entry and exit will be designated to maintain appropriate distancing to avoid face to face contact and will be monitored by a bailiff;
  - d. 6 foot floor markings will be placed in the courthouse lobby where lines form at the service window;
  - e. Personal contact will be kept to a minimum by providing give away pens if signatures are required;
  - f. On courtroom entry for dockets, the six foot distance will be maintained while going through security check;
  - g. No more than ten defendants will be scheduled for any docket in time intervals that will maintain social distancing and courtroom capacity;
  - h. The bailiff will wear personal protective equipment during the security check;
  - i. Seating will be separated at a minimum distance of 6 feet and all chairs in excess of 25% capacity will be removed;

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- j. Defendants and participants will not approach the bench or court staff closer than 6 feet;
- k. Documents will be transmitted to the service counter outside the courtroom for signature, if necessary, and retrieval (the service counter has a window barrier);
- l. Without a personal appearance, any defendant in the vulnerable population will be given the opportunity to schedule an alternate method for appearance or reschedule their case(s) by phone, mail, email or website.
- m. Judges and court staff will telework whenever possible and feasible.

### **Scheduling**

- 1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
  - 10 defendants on August 5, 2020 at 5:30 pm
  - 10 defendants on August 5, 2020 at 6:15 pm
  - 10 defendants on August 5, 2020 at 7:00 pm
- a. The Municipal Court will be open Monday through Friday for walk in business only at the clerk's window. All social distancing guidelines will be implemented.
- b. A docket will be held the first Wednesday of every month with each defendant being kept at a minimum six foot away from each other with 25% seating capacity.

### **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, asthma and those whose immune systems are compromised are considered to be vulnerable populations.
- 2. Each 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 courts website and in conspicuous locations around the court building.
- 3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by allowing them, without a personal appearance (phone, mail, email or website) to schedule an alternate method for appearance (video or phone conference) or reschedule their case(s).

### **Social Distancing**

- 1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court building will be required to maintain social distancing of at least six feet.
- 2. Each restroom will be marked to allow the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing.
- 3. Public common areas have been closed to the public.

### **Gallery**

- 4. 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.

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5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.

Well

6. In the courtroom the prosecutor is in the meeting room which is separate from the courtroom, judge and bailiff are in the courtroom and have been arranged so that they are at least six feet between each other.

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer have been placed in the building courtroom and service window.
2. Tissues will be available for public use in all public areas.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" had been posted in multiple locations.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the bailiff will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have 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 question 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 100.00F 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, disposable gloves and hand sanitizer nearby.

### **Face Coverings**

1. All individuals entering the building will always be required to wear face coverings.
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.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court building for over one hours will be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

### **Cleaning**

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every forty-five minutes and at the end of the court session.
2. Court is held only once a month with one docket at Double Oak Municipal Court.
3. The court building is cleaned and sanitized the morning after court.

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4. The court building cleaning staff have cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
5. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

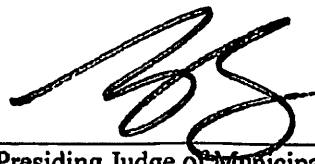
### Other

A notice will be sent with all our notice to appears so that defendants are aware of what to expect during court when appearing in person.

We do not transport inmates.

After conferring with the Town Mayor, local health authority and several clerks, The COVID-19 Operating Plan was approved up to safety standards to hold court. I will ensure that the judges and court staff covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 6/18/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

