

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Elmendorf Tx Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the court, the Municipal Court of Elmendorf, Tx 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 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 4, 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: All judges and court staff shall self-monitor for symptoms and take proper steps to self-quarantine if needed.
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 at all time.
5. Protective Measures: Follow recommendations from state and county officials.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
When court begins, defendants will be kept 6 feet apart and all precautions will be made to ensure proper distancing. All that takes place in the courtroom and lobby will be using the same protocols as set forth above.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over the age of 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. A notice with this information will be posted on the courts' websites and in conspicuous locations around the court building (a copy of which is attached).
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by extensions until it is safe for them to come into the court or have the option of talking to the Judge or prosecutor via telephone or a video call.

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. 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.

Gallery

4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom is 4 and has been posted. 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 set up to maintain social distancing of at least six feet between each chair.

Well

6. 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. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of the courtroom, and outside the of bathroom.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judge's bench, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations of the court building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, before being allowed access, the Court Clerk or receptionist 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 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 face masks and gloves.

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 the proper cloth face coverings with them. If the individual shows up to Court without a face mask they will be rescheduled until a time when they can report to Court with a proper face covering on.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 2 hours and the defendant's podium will be cleaned between every defendant court appearance.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and 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 COVID-19 virus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

A copy of the Defendants screening sheet will be placed in their court file. This Covid-19 sheeting sheet will include the defendants name, screening question to determine so symptoms are being shown and defendants temperature as recording when entering the building.

I have conferred with all judges and appropriate authorities regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I have reviewed all advisories from the local health authority and county judge. I will ensure that the Elmendorf municipal judges conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/19/2020

Charles R. Stubblefield

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court