

# COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Flatonia Municipal Court

City of Flatonia, Fayette County, Texas

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the building housing the court, the Flatonia 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 will adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. Non-essential in-person proceedings will begin no sooner than November 6, 2020.

## **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements are as follows:  
When Judge and Court Staff attempt to enter the courthouse building, the 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. Judge and Court Staff who indicate yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the courthouse building.  
When Judge and Court Staff attempt to enter the courthouse building, the bailiff will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Judge and Court Staff whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F will be refused admittance to the courthouse building.
2. Judge and court staff will be required to wear face coverings that cover both the nose and mouth and are required to practice social distancing and appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.

## **Scheduling**

1. Court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in areas used by the court. The court will stagger the times of cases set to minimize contact. Scheduling for court appearances will be timed so that one defendant is inside the courtroom at a time. Defendants arriving early must wait outside the courthouse building until the previous defendant exits the courthouse building.

## **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. Information will be included 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 special settings. A teleconference option will be offered.
4. Scheduling for court appearances will be timed so that one defendant is inside the courtroom at a time. Defendants arriving early must wait outside the courthouse building until the previous defendant exits the courthouse building.



## **Social Distancing**

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the courthouse building will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.
2. People will not be allowed to bring a child into the courthouse building unless the child is a witness in a case.
3. The restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity has been posted on the restroom door. Anyone having to wait, must wait outside the restroom until a person exits the restroom.

## *Gallery*

4. The 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 everyother row.

## *Well*

6. The counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and bailiff seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.

## **Protective Measures**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed outside the entrance to the courthouse building and outside the restroom.
2. Tissues have been placed near the entrance to the courthouse building, at counsel tables, in the restroom and at the judge's bench.
3. Social distancing will be enforced. A minimum of 6 feet will be required.
4. Face masks that cover both the nose and mouth and gloves will be available.
5. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted inside the entrance to the courtroom.

## **Screening**

1. The area outside the courthouse building door will be designated for screening of those entering.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the courthouse building, the 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 courthouse building.
3. When individuals attempt to enter the courthouse building, the bailiff will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F will be refused admittance to the courthouse building.
4. Bailiffs who are screening individuals entering the courthouse building will be provided personal protective equipment, including masks that cover both the nose and mouth, hand sanitizer, gloves and eye protection.

## **Face Coverings**

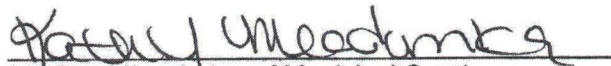
1. All individuals entering the courthouse building are required to wear face coverings that cover both the nose and mouth at all times.
2. Individuals will be asked to bring face coverings that cover both the nose and mouth with them, but if an individual does not have a face covering that covers both the nose and mouth, a disposable face mask that covers both the nose and mouth will be provided.

## Cleaning

1. Courtroom staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
2. Courtroom staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
3. Courtroom staff have been provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

I have reviewed with this Operating Plan with those working in the courtroom. 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 as judge of the court covered by this Operating Plan proceedings will be conducted consistent with the plan.

Date: 10-05-2020

  
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

# **FLATONIA MUNICIPAL COURT**

## **NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

The following notice shall be posted on the Court's website, at the entrance to the Court and at the Court Clerk's window, and in all orders setting hearings, docket notices, and other communications

### **NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

The following are considered to be a member of Vulnerable Populations:

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.

Any person who is in a Vulnerable Population category may contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations, which will include the ability to participate in electronic or telephonic proceedings. If you do not have the technology to appear electronically or by telephone, the court will make accommodations for you at the court that will include the ability to so participate using equipment that will be sanitized between users. If you appear in person at the court, you will be required to wear a protective mask or one will be provided to you if you do not have one.





October 6, 2020

Judge Kathy Mladenka  
Presiding Judge  
City of Flatonia Municipal Court  
125 E. Main Street  
Flatonia, TX 78941

Dear Judge Kathy Mladenka,

I have reviewed the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Flatonia City Judiciary in my role as Health Authority for Fayette County. I am in agreement with the plan and have no concerns or additional comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to consult with you on the plan.

Respectfully,

*Sharon K. Melville, MD, MPH*

Sharon K. Melville, MD, MPH  
Texas Department of State Health Services  
Regional Medical Director, PHR 7

City of Flatonia  
P O Box 329  
125 East South Main St.  
Flatonia, Texas 78941

October 12, 2020

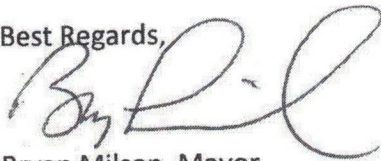
Judge Kathy Mladenka  
City of Flatonia Municipal Court  
125 E. South Main St.  
Flatonia, Texas 78941

Dear Kathy:

I have reviewed the updated COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Flatonia Judiciary as presented. I am in agreement with the plan.

Thank you for working with the Texas Department of State Health Services to keep our Municipal Court current and up to day during this pandemic.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan Milson", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Bryan Milson, Mayor  
City of Flatonia