

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Garden Ridge Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judge(s), and other individuals entering the buildings housing the court, the City of Garden Ridge 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 to 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 1, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. The 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: Health Screening will be done each day and before each court session.
3. The Judge 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: In case a Judge or court staff has any of the above symptoms they will be sent home. The Judge or court staff will not be allowed to return to work unless the individual obtains a medical professional note clearing the individual for return.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Court dates will be scheduled on the 25th of June 2020 at 5:00pm, 6:00pm and 6:30pm and every forth Thursday of the month with adjustments depending on case load. Court dates and times are subject to change. Walk-ins will not be allowed during court days.

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. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by being seated first and will be seen first.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be provided with case specific detailed options to take care of their offense without making an appearance. Court staff will communicate by notifying individuals and receive accommodations. To discuss the options which may be available to these individuals, they may call the court at 210-651-6632, to speak with court personnel.
4. A notice with this information will be posted on the court's video display.

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 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.
5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

6. In each courtroom, 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 of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and the court counter.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, designated officer 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, designated office will use 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. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperature taken prior to transport. Inmates with symptoms or a temperature equal to or above 99.6°F will not be transported to the court building.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including face mask and disposable 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 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 1 hour will be required to wear a mask. If a mask is not available your case may be reset for a later date.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the court window area of the court after every person that comes in contact with the area.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom before and after each session.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.
5. Each pen at the clerk's window will be sanitized with the appropriate cleaning supplies.

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 the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

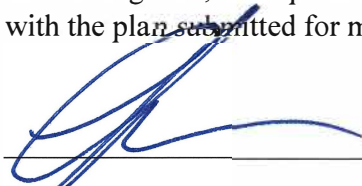
Date: 6/5/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I, G. Lanny Thompson, Mayor for the City of Garden Ridge, Texas, in Comal County, acknowledge that I have been consulted regarding the COVID-19 plan the Garden Ridge Municipal Court must submit to Regional Judge for approval in order to hold in person hearings before August 1, 2020 pursuant the Texas Supreme Court emergency orders. I have no issues with the plan submitted for my review.



(Signature)

June 4, 2020

(Date)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I, Dorothy N. Overman MD Health Authority for Comal County, Texas, acknowledge that I have been consulted regarding the COVID-19 plan the Garden Ridge Municipal Court must submit to Regional Judge for approval in order to hold in person hearings before August 1, 2020 pursuant the Texas Supreme Court emergency orders. I have no issues with the attached plan.

Dorothy N. Overman MD 06/03/2020

(Signature)

(Date)

DO NOT ENTER if you are experiencing any of the following COVID-19 symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, or fatigue, or if you have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Call **210-651-6632** to discuss your options. Anyone who enters and appears to have COVID-19 symptoms will be immediately escorted out and asked about their symptoms. If necessary, they will be required to leave and will be advised to call the court.

Thank You for Your Patience

Garden Ridge Municipal Court

NO ENTRAR si experimenta alguno de los siguientes síntomas de COVID-19: tos, falta de aliento, fiebre, escalofríos, dolor muscular, dolor de cabeza, dolor de garganta, nueva pérdida de sabor u olfato, diarrea, vómitos, náuseas o fatiga, o si ha estado en contacto cercano con una persona que se confirmó que tiene COVID-19. Llame al **210-651-6632** para discutir sus opciones. Cualquier persona que ingrese y parezca tener síntomas de COVID-19 será escoltada inmediatamente y se le preguntará acerca de sus síntomas. Si es necesario, se les pedirá que se vayan y se les aconsejará que llamen a la corte.

Gracias por su paciencia

Garden Ridge Municipal Court

NOTICE

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 and are urged to resolve the charge without making a personal appearance. If you are in this group or think you are in this group, please call **210-651-6632** to discuss your options.

Thank You for Your Patience

Garden Ridge Municipal Court

AVISO

Las personas que tienen más de 65 años y las personas con aflicciones de salud subyacentes graves, como presión arterial alta, enfermedad pulmonar crónica, diabetes, obesidad, asma y aquellos cuyos sistemas inmunes están comprometidos, como la quimioterapia para el cáncer u otras afecciones que requieren dicha terapia son se consideran poblaciones vulnerables y se les insta a resolver el cargo sin hacer una aparición personal. Si está en este grupo o cree que está en este grupo, llame al 210-651-óó32 para discutir sus opciones.

Gracias por su paciencia

Garden Ridge Municipal Court