



GARLAND

MUNICIPAL COURT

POST PANDEMIC REOPENING STRATEGY

1. Facility Prep

2. Essential Services at Minimal Level

3. Essential Services at Normal Level

4. All Programs and Services at Full Capacity

Phase 1: Prepare facility for staff to return to work safety

- Install thermal temperature monitoring equipment at public and employee entrances to the building*
- Provide PPE equipment for all staff/ public who may arrive without proper face coverings (*coverings should properly cover mouth and nose*)
- Establish COVID enforcement protocol with Marshals office for staff and public
 - Public required to complete COVID screening questionnaire at Marshal entry point
 - Social distancing is required in the facility at all times
 - Established one way entrances and exits of the building for public/ staff
 - *Prohibited entry for anyone showing signs of illness or symptoms of COVID 19 or with measured temperatures > 100.0 degrees; failures as indicated by thermal- temp screening device (*screener required*)
- Frequent & regular sanitation of common areas and Courtrooms between hearings and after recesses.
 - Plexi-glass barriers between staff and public; including Metal detector entrance, Docket clerk areas, Judges bench, Prosecutor tables & Marshal stations
 - Hand sanitizer stations at employee & public entrances to the building and outside courtrooms
 - Tissue available in lobbies, Courtrooms and Breakrooms

- Visible signage emphasizing the need to maintain social distancing and practice high levels of hygiene techniques in common areas, such as restrooms, breakrooms, lobbies, hallways, entrances and exits
- Website warning and written notice discouraging vulnerable individuals, those 65 & older, caregivers or those with underlying health conditions, from entering the Courthouse, but to contact the Court for alternative accommodations** to resolve their case

Phase 2: Return Essential Staff necessary to support minimum services for your department at a basic level

- Mandatory Screening by Thermal Temp Screening equipment upon entry (anyone failing or refusing to screen will not be allowed in the facility)
- Mandatory Utilization of PPE for staff while on Court premises
- Enforcement of Social distancing & use of PPE requirements for staff
- Rotate staff in on Tuesdays & Fridays to perform essential tasks only
- All other staff will work remotely
- All staff must wear face covering when in the Court building
- All public must wear face covering when in the Court building
- Online access for citizens will be increased to minimize the need for entering the Courthouse
- Staff required to complete essential tasks will do so quickly and efficiently to minimize time on the premises
- Increased sanitization on Tuesdays and Fridays
- Onsite maintenance personnel cleaning common areas, entrances, elevators, exits every few hours and deep cleaning all areas after staff vacates
- Notices to be sent out for dockets that will be set 3 weeks away
- Dockets will be reduced by 50% of previous caseload
- Family violence cases will be given additional hearing dates
- The possibility of zoom hearings will be investigated
- Judicial consultation with Garland Health Department and City Mayor on plans for reopening Court proceedings (*documentation of consultation required*)
- Copy of Court Reopening Plan and documentation sent to Regional Judge for approval

Phase 3: Return staff to a level which allows for full service levels for all essential services

- Open lobby to the public
- All staff must wear face covering when in the Court building
- All public must wear face covering when in the Court building
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- Mandatory Screening by Thermal Temp Screening equipment upon entry (anyone failing or refusing to screen will not be allowed in the facility)
- Two Marshals on duty in the lobby
- Lobby traffic will be limited and enforced by the Marshals, not to exceed 25% building capacity including all staffing
- Maintain enforcement of social distancing for staff & the public
- Highly visible signage/ guides for the public
- Mandatory Utilization of PPE for staff while on Court premises
- Return all window staff, telephone staff & backup staff to onsite status
- Onsite maintenance personnel cleaning common areas, restrooms, court rooms, entrances/exits, elevators, every few hours and deep cleaning after building is vacated every evening

Phase 4: Return all programs and services to full capacity with full staffing levels

- Return staff in the office with Phase 3 requirements in place
- Lobby and Court rooms open to the public with restrictions
- Four Marshals on duty (2 in the lobby & 2 upstairs for Court)
- Scheduling in the Courtroom will be limited to 15 persons per Courtroom with designated seating at social distancing standards, enforced by the Marshals
- Open Courtroom will be used for the second 15 litigants to appear to spread the number of people out.
- Judge and Clerks will move from Courtroom 1 to the open courtroom for the second part of the docket to allow social distancing in the courtrooms.
- Each courtroom will seat around 15 people with social distancing.
- Dockets will be reduced by 50%; minimal people allowed in Court
- Overflow for Court will be distanced in the hallway by Marshals or ask to wait in their vehicles
- ****Vulnerable Option Docket**
 - Must be requested in advance
 - Dockets will be set on Friday mornings 15 minutes apart

- Only 2 persons will be allowed up to the Courtroom at a time.
 - Remaining persons will be required to wait in their cars and will be summoned by the Marshal when the Court is ready for them.
(This limits the number of vulnerable individuals in close proximity with the public and others)
- Staff meetings via zoom or held in large rooms with distancing requirements
 - Employees who are sick or displaying symptoms of an illness will not be permitted in the building or sent home if symptoms of illness develop

Special Considerations:

- Vulnerable staff will be reviewed for remote work assignments due to age, underlying health conditions, etc., if qualified; case by case determinations will be assessed with HR confirmations
- Staff with childcare/sick child issues will be reviewed on a case by case basis for remote assignments
- Any high risk litigant who requests special considerations will be placed on a Friday morning docket that can accommodate individual hearings. Litigants will wait in their cars until the court is ready for their case. Marshals will notify them when it is their turn for a hearing.