

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Giddings Municipal Court Lee County, Texas

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, the Municipal Court of Giddings, Texas 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. Our judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The Court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and comply and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions of the Covid-19 plan.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 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: Concurrent with TMCEC and OCA.
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 not be required to wear face coverings, but will practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.

Scheduling

1. The court schedules will be established to reduce occupancy in the court 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. 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' 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 special limiting requirements.

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.
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 each courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff and or the bailiff.
5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.
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.
2. 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, Court Clerks 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. (Attendees will affirm and the Clerk will document.)

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every Court session.
2. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

I have attempted to confer with the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of the court with the courtroom in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date:

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

Documentation of Required

Meeting for COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Giddings Municipal Court

Submitted to Regional Judge Olen Underwood

May 20, 2020, the City of Giddings Court personnel met with the Mayor, City Manager, Emergency Management Coordinator and went over the procedures and proposed operating plan.

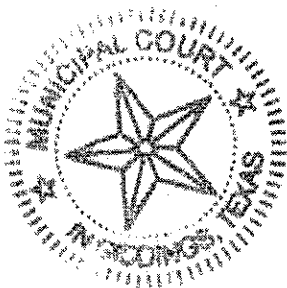
Discussions were held and additions and subtractions were made to the template and all were in agreement.

Please find the enclosed plan as a result of the above meeting and forward to you for your perusal and approval.

We hope to have your approval by June 1st, 2020.



Judge Robert Lee



Olen Underwood
5/26/20