

HEWITT TEXAS II

COVID-19 Operating Plan for Hewitt Municipal Court McLennan County Judiciary

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 courts of **Hewitt 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 county judge and mayor and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the county.
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: will be taking temperatures, asking the questions, providing hand sanitizer, and following strict social distancing guidelines.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.0°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: hand sanitizer provided, Lysol spray, no bathroom use for public, temperature monitoring.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: YouTube meeting will be held when possible, no more than two persons will be allowed in building at once that pass all inspections and guideline requirements.

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, 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 via YouTube meetings or reschedule them.

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 six (6) feet.
2. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in an elevator. If more than one individual from the same household is in an elevator, no other individuals will be permitted in the elevator.
3. 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.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

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

Well

7. 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 six (6) feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of elevators on each floor, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness

stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.

3. The Department of State Health Services' "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, the bailiff or Municipal Court Staff or other City Staff 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, City Administrator, City Secretary, or other City Staff, Court Staff 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 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 100.0°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 taking their temperatures, providing hand sanitizer, and mask.

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.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court building for over one (1) hour will be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned before and after court hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms 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 coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

All staff have been briefed and will be following the strict guidelines that the State and CDC have suggested.

Those who are not allowed entry to the court due to the screening process can be allowed entry once they meet one of the following criteria:

COVID-19 test done and there is a negative result. A COVID-19 antibody test does not qualify.

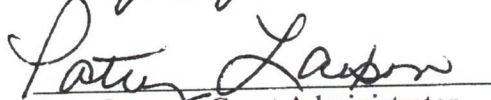
In the case of a person who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to work when all three of the following criteria are met: at least three (3) days (72 hours) have passed recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least ten (10) days have passed since first appeared; or

In the case of a person who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual may not return until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or

If the person has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.


I have attempted to confer with all 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, City Administrator, and all other City Staff 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: July 28, 2020


Patty Laxson, Court Administrator


Dan Francis, Municipal Judge

CITY OF HEWITT, TEXAS


Charles D. Turner, Mayor

HEWITT TEXAS

NOTICE AND WARNING

Persons entering City Hall, the Municipal Court and related offices do so at their own risk. Intentional efforts are made to reduce health and safety hazards. However, in a time of pandemic when unseen and uncontrolled hazards may be present. The possibility of potential allergic reaction to sanitation efforts, as well as persons, spreading potentially infectious agents and disease may be present. Enter at your own risk. The City of Hewitt assumes no liability in the event a person(s) become ill following a visit to the City Hall/Municipal Court.

The City of Hewitt and Hewitt Municipal Court in its efforts to serve the community, administer justice equitably in open public venue, while protecting the health and welfare of individuals, during this time of COVID-19 Pandemic will enforce the following guidelines.

1. Only Individual Defendants, their legal representative, or interpreters shall be allowed to approach the bar and converse with the Judge. Minors may be accompanied by one parent or legal guardian.
2. All persons shall minimize in-person contact which includes maintaining six feet of separation between individuals. When maintaining six feet of separation is not feasible, other methods should be utilized to slow the spread of COVID-19, such as wearing a face covering or mask, washing or sanitizing hands frequently, and avoid sharing common objects such as pens which are not sanitized. Common objects should be sanitized when possible before and after use.

HEWITT TEXAS

HEWITT MUNICIPAL COURT COVID-19 SCREENING FORM

Persons appearing at Hewitt City Hall for a Court appearance shall be screened prior to being allowed into the court. Persons answering YES to the following questions, or having a temperature in excess of 100.0°F shall not be allowed into the building or court. Remote appearance before the court is a ready option.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Do you have any of the following signs or symptoms as new, worsening, or within the last seven days:

- _____ Cough
- _____ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- _____ Chills
- _____ Repeated shaking with chills
- _____ Muscle pain
- _____ Headache
- _____ Sore throat
- _____ Loss of taste or smell
- _____ Diarrhea
- _____ Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0°F
- _____ Contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19 WITHIN THE LAST 14 DAYS

Acknowledgement of form:

I have read and understand the NOTICE and WARNING posted upon entering Hewitt City Hall and Court. I have answered the above questions to the best of my ability.

Signature

date