



City of Holland

Presiding Judge Matthew G. Wright

Associate Judge Sharon L. Diaz

COVID-19 Operating Plan

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 the City of Holland 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 as per Order 2020-DR-1 issued by the Presiding Judge.
3. The Presiding Judge will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and county judge and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. Court Clerks will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than September 1, 2020 and will follow the remote docket setting as outlined directives of the Presiding Judge.

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. 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,

Page 1 of 4

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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.

3. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Protective Measures:
 - a. Additional barriers will be provided to create shielding for the attorneys, staff, citizens and judges.
 - b. Hand sanitizer will be readily available for use by all participants.
 - c. Dockets will be limited to ensure social distancing and to minimize the number of people in the courtroom area.
 - d. Thermometers have been obtained for each court and shall be used for screenings.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
 - a. Dockets set from June 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020 will be conducted via video-based services. In-Person hearings and appearances will be conducted by request of the party and approved by the Court given prevailing health and emergency conditions.
 - b. Additional docket days will be scheduled to allow for smaller pools of defendants and court spectators.
 - c. All Jury Trials are suspended until a date later than October 1, 2020.

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).

“If you are over age 65 and/or with serious underlying health condition, 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. If you are a member of the vulnerable population, please contact the Court prior to the date of your court setting to make arrangements for remote appearance or a continuance in your case.”

3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by one of the following:
 - a. Scheduling of remote appearance; and/or
 - b. a reset to a later date to accommodate improved health conditions.

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, including breakrooms and snackrooms, 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 outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues will be available to all participants and visitors.
3. The Department of State Health Service’s “Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer” will be posted in the location where the Court is in session.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the bailiff or court clerk 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 area of the building, the bailiff or court clerk 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 99.8°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 masks and 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 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 prior to each court session.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms after each court session.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.

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 county judge. 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.

June 30, 2020


Matthew G. Wright
Presiding Judge


Mayor
City of Holland