

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Jacinto City Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, prosecutors, judges, and other individuals entering the building housing the court, the Municipal Court of Jacinto City, 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. All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The Presiding Judge of Jacinto City Municipal Court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority, Harris County Judge and the Mayor of Jacinto City, Texas so as to adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city of Jacinto City, Texas.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than the 26th day of May 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 will be monitored daily.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.4°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 are encouraged to wear face coverings, practice physical distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times. Face masks meeting the CDC guidelines will be provided to each court staff member or officer along with instruction for proper PPE use.
5. Protective Measures will be implemented including social distance markers, plexiglass sneeze barriers, and an enhanced cleaning schedule and staff.
6. COVID-related training or information will be provided to staff; including symptoms of COVID-19, how to make a face covering and where to get tested.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:

4:30 PM Dockets

- No more than 10 individuals present in the Court at all times.
- Sign-in at the check-in table with name and cell phone number.

- Once you see judge you must return to your vehicle or wait outside and await a text from the Court to return and complete your paperwork at the clerk's station.

5:00 PM Dockets

- No more than 10 individuals present in the Court at all times.
- Sign-in at the check-in table with name and cell phone number.
- Once you see judge you must return to your vehicle or wait outside and await a text from the Court to return and complete your paperwork at the clerk's station.

2:00 PM Dockets

- No more than 10 individuals present in the Court at all times.
- Sign-in at the check-in table with name and cell phone number.
- Once you see judge you must return to your vehicle or wait outside and await a text from the Court to return and complete your paperwork at the clerk's station.

Vulnerable Populations

- 1. Individuals who are 65 and older 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 having the opportunity to appear remotely via zoom.**

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 which will be marked on the floor with tape.
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 snack rooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

1. 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.
1. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.

Well

1. 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 near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways. Waste bins are available for disposal of tissue.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations in the court building.
4. Signage is provided related to proper hand washing to avoid the spread of Covid 19.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, court staff will screen individuals entering the building using the State checklist for COVID-19 symptoms. Individuals who indicate yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court building **and their case will be reset.**
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the Court Staff 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.
 - Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including but not limited to face mask, gloves, and other personal protective equipment as necessary along with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes.
3. Screening staff will be trained in the screening procedures.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building are encouraged to wear face coverings at all times. Notices will be provided to all participants advising of the requirement to wear face coverings. The notice will include guidance on how to make face coverings and how to wear them properly. It will also suggest bringing one's own pen.
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 1 hour will be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas and frequently touched surfaces of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 2 hours and frequently touched surfaces at least every hour.
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 and are EPA-registered disinfectants.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

Individuals are encouraged to bring their pens. If they must use a Court offered pen it will be sanitized after each use.

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 the Mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the Judges of City of Jacinto City Municipal Court who are covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 21st day of May, 2020



Lon D. Squyres
City Manager