

## COVID-19 Operating Plan for Jamaica Beach Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the Jamaica Beach Municipal Court area, the Jamaica Beach 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 proceeding remotely.
3. The presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and mayor and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020.

### **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Judges and court staff will undergo a health screening each time they enter the Justice Center.
2. Protective Measures:
  - Six feet of physical distancing should be maintained between both employees and members of the public;
  - There should be no physical contact involving employees at work;
  - Employees are encouraged to frequently wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer;
  - Where social distancing cannot be maintained all employees are required to wear masks or face coverings while at work;
  - Employees having physical contact with the public must wear masks or face coverings while interacting with the public;
  - Employees may not work on site if they are experiencing new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID-19, including cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, feeling feverish, have a measured temperature greater than or equal to 99.6°F, or have had known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19;
  - Any employee who does not report to or is asked to leave work due to the above restriction is required to seek testing or professional medical evaluation for COVID-19. The individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual to return based on an alternative diagnosis or qualify as recovered.

### **Scheduling**

1. To reduce occupancy in the court building, all individuals scheduled for court shall remain outside the court building until their case is called. Everyone who is to enter the court building is subject to screening as delineated herein.

### **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 being offered the option to reschedule or participate in court proceedings remotely by teleconferencing.

### **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.

#### *Judge's Bench Area*

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, 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 judge's benches, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of the State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

### **Screening**

close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Individuals who indicated yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court building.

2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, court personnel will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100°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 99.6°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 mask, gloves and hand sanitizer.

#### 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

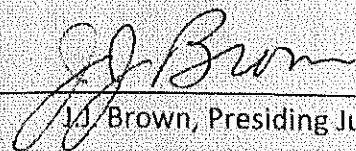
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every twenty-four hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day 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

1. In consultation with the Galveston County Health District and the Jamaica Beach Mayor, this Plan is subject to modification as necessary to comply with best practices to ensure the health and safety of all individuals entering the court building.
2. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority, the mayor, and the presiding district judge, documentation of which is attached to this plan.
3. Remote hearings are available upon written request via Zoom.

June 17, 2020

Date



J. Brown, Presiding Judge



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### **NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

INDIVIDUALS IN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS\* SHALL CONTACT THE COURT AND IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS A VULNERABLE INDIVIDUAL AT LEAST 48 HOURS PRIOR TO ANY APPEARANCE DATE AND/OR HEARING DATE AT THE COURT TELEPHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE TO HAVE THEIR APPEARANCE RESCHEDULED TO A LATER DATE OR SCHEDULED REMOTELY VIA TELEPHONE.

### **NOTICE TO ALL PARTIES**

Remote hearings are available to all parties including, but not limited to the vulnerable populations.

*\*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.*