



Marble Falls Municipal Court
606 Avenue N. Marble Falls, Texas 78654
830-693-7173 Fax 830-693-4032

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Municipal Court for the city of Marble Falls, 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 Marble Falls will implement the following protective measures:

General

- All court staff 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.
- All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
- 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.
- The Municipal Judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

- The Municipal Judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
- Glass windows exist to separate the public from court staff.
- Judges and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: The court will obtain an infrared thermometer to check temperatures of the judge and court staff, which will be checked daily for those who are in the court building.
- 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.
- Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings whenever they are in direct contact with the public or others (face coverings will not be required when judges or court staff are working alone in their offices), and shall practice social distancing and appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
- Masks, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be provided to staff and judges.

Scheduling

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

- Cases shall be conducted remotely to the fullest extent possible.
- In-person cases shall be scheduled no closer than 15 minutes apart and shall be 30 minutes apart if possible.
- Each individual (and parent if juvenile) will be brought into the courtroom by bailiff and seating will be set up 6 feet apart.

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.
- Vulnerable populations will be accommodated by allowing them to appear by electronic means.

Social Distancing

- 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.
- Public lobby area has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and floors are marked to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet apart.

Courtroom

- The maximum number of persons permitted in the courtroom has been determined to be 8 persons and will be posted prior to any hearing. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff and bailiff.
- The courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.
- In the courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk's table, 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

- Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at clerk window and inside the bathroom.
- Tissues have been placed at the clerk window, at counsel tables, on the judge's bench, at the clerk's table and at the bailiff's table.
- The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in the court lobby.

Screening

- When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the bailiff or 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.
- Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including masks and gloves.

Face Coverings

- Individuals will be encouraged to bring face coverings with them but the court staff will be practicing social distancing.
- Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings whenever they are in direct contact with the public or others unless they are maintaining social distancing 6 feet apart.
- Bailiffs will be required to wear face masks and gloves.

Cleaning

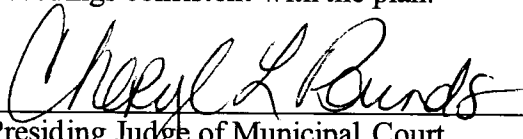
- Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building daily so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 24 hours. Other areas, such as tables, counters, chairs, door handles to which public has access shall be cleaned between each use.
- Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every proceeding and at the end of each day the courtroom is used. For purposes of this Plan the term “courtroom” includes a room in which a defendant may be placed for electronic hearings. If a defendant or the public uses a computer terminal or other electronic equipment, the equipment shall be cleaned between use by different people.
- Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
- Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

When people sign in for court proceedings, every person shall receive a pen and clipboard that has been sanitized by court staff between each use. They will keep these with them to sign any paperwork. After hearing, they will place clipboards and pens into a tub for court staff to sanitize after all hearings.

I have conferred with all court staff regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judge of the court covered by this Operating Plan conducts proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: May 28, 2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

Date:

Presiding Regional Administrative Judge

POSTED ON EXTERIOR DOORS OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
AND POSTED ON COURT WEBSITE



COVID-19 NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS
PLEASE DO NOT APPEAR IN COURT IF YOU ARE SICK

PLEASE CALL THE NUMBER BELOW THE DAY BEFORE TO RESCHEDULE.
COURT TELEPHONE NUMBER: 830-693-7173

NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATION INDIVIDUALS

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.

Except for specific legal requirements, members of vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by being given an opportunity to appear by teleconference or videoconferencing, to submit necessary information in written form, or by rescheduling of the in-person hearing until a time after the COVID-19 crisis has diminished.

Contact the Court for further information or if you have any questions.

Judge Cheryl L. Pounds
Presiding Judge
Marble Falls Municipal Court
Burnet County, Texas