



## Prairie View, Texas Municipal Court COVID-19 Judicial Plan of Operations

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals enter the buildings housing the court, the Prairie View Municipal Court will implement the following protective protocols.

### GENERAL:

1. 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. Judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The presiding judge of the municipal court will communicate regularly with the mayor and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the City of Prairie View.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential proceedings no sooner than June 2, 2020.

### JUDGES 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 and court staff monitoring requirements: Upon entering the court building, court personnel will be temperature checked by the police department. There is one entrance to the court lobby which allows for monitored and controlled entry.
3. Judges and/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 will be required to seek medical advice prior to returning, in accordance with the protocols implemented by the mayor.
4. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
5. Court personnel will be provided with a face covering, disposable gloves, and hand sanitizer at each work station. In addition, hand sanitizer will be available and the clerk's service window for customers who visit the window, inside the courtroom, and at the metal detector screening station. After each setting, the courtroom, the entrance door handles, and front counters will be sanitized with Lysol or Clorox, or comparable disinfectant wipes. The courtroom chairs will be sprayed with aerosol disinfectant after each use.

## SCHEDULING

1. Many of the defendants who appear in the Prairie View Municipal Court are students of Prairie View A & M University, as well as transient defendants who do not reside in or near the City of Prairie View. The Court disposes of many cases via electronic means, rather than in-person appearances. Court appearances will continue to be scheduled as usual, however the number of individuals who may enter the building and courtroom at one time will be limited in order to comply with social distancing guidelines. Only the defendant will be allowed in the courtroom unless he or she is required to have a parent or guardian; or requires a personal care attendant.
2. The Court will continue to add additional preventative measures as deemed necessary or helpful in the prevention of the spread of coronavirus or other communicable illnesses.
3. The in-person court appearances will be limited to adhere to six-foot distancing.

## VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

1. Defendants considered to be vulnerable or those over age 65 years old, and individuals with underlying health conditions (high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma), and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations.
2. The 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 is attached*).
3. The Court will accommodate vulnerable populations by continuing the case to a later date, by appointment, or by electronic means.

## 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 feet.
2. Due to the square footage of the restrooms, only one defendant will be allowed to enter the restroom at a time.
3. Common areas in the building will be closed to the public.
4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom has been determined to be not more than nine persons; however, may be fewer if stricter guidelines are required. Defendants will be ushered by the bailiff and monitored to enforce compliance.
5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to at least six feet across, and every other row.
6. Counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerks', and bailiff's seating have been arranged to ensure six-foot social distancing between each space.

7. An acrylic shield has been installed at the judge's bench and clerk's station that further separates the staff and court participants.

#### **HYGIENE**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrance to the building, at various locations in the lobby, inside the restrooms, inside and outside of the courtroom, at the bailiff's station, at the prosecutor's table, and at the COVID-19 screening station.
2. Tissues have been placed at counsel tables, witness stand, on the judge's bench, the clerks' station, at the prosecutor's table, at the bailiff's station, and in the lobby.
3. The Department of State Health Service's *"Stop the Spread of Germs"* and *The CDC's "Follow These 5 Safety Tips"* posters have been posted in multiple locations in the building.

#### **SCREENING**

1. A member of the police staff (or other appointee) will be stationed at the entrance to the building, and using a "no-contact" infrared thermometer, will take the temperature any person who desires to enter the building. Any person with a temperature of 100.0°F or over will be refused admittance to the building.
2. A member of the police staff (or other appointee) will be stationed at the entrance to the building, and will ask each person who desires to enter the building if he/she is feeling feverish; has a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; or has been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19, or has traveled internationally or domestically within the 14 days preceding the current date. Individuals who indicate "yes" to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court building.
3. Screening staff will be provided gloves, masks, 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 building.

#### **CLEANING**

1. The courtroom will be cleaned and sanitized on an ongoing basis throughout the day, including wiping down all surfaces, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
2. Ink pens and clip boards will be sanitized with alcohol after each use.
3. The cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every two hours while court is in session and defendants are in the building and at the end of the day.




4. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with the coronavirus, and have received proper training for cleaning.
5. The cleaning staff have been issued face coverings, gloves, supplies, and equipment necessary for their protection.

**OTHER**

Floor markings are placed six feet apart on the outside sidewalk for persons who desire to enter the building, at the entrance, and on the floor in the lobby for the clerk's window.

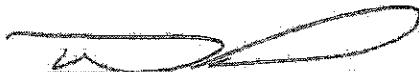
The prosecutor utilizes the jury deliberation room for visiting with defendants. The room has a seven-foot table, which allows the six feet between the defendant and the prosecutor, which is sufficient for social distancing guidelines. The prosecutor may use a separate conference room and meet virtually with the defendant, who will be placed in the jury deliberation room. Either option will allow for protective measures beneficial to both parties and while allowing a private setting for negotiations. Seating in the gallery will be marked and defendants directed to sit where marked to comply with social distancing guidelines.

This Operating Plan is consistent with CDC and State Health Guidelines, and has been approved by the Mayor and the Waller County Office of Emergency Management.




Shelytha Alexander-Simmons  
Presiding Judge  
Prairie View, Waller County, Texas

\*This operating plan is approved by the mayor.



David E. Allen  
Mayor  
Prairie View, Waller County, Texas



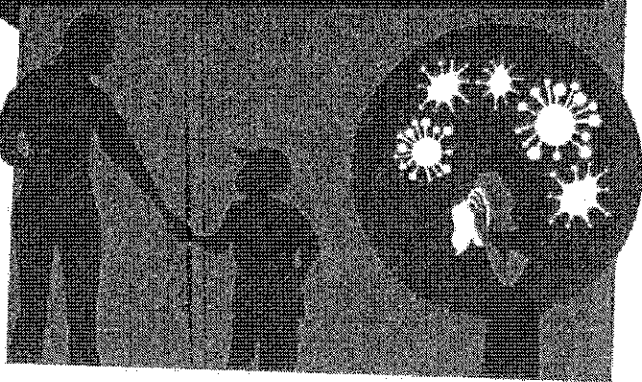
July 9, 2020

**COVID-19**  
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

# STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

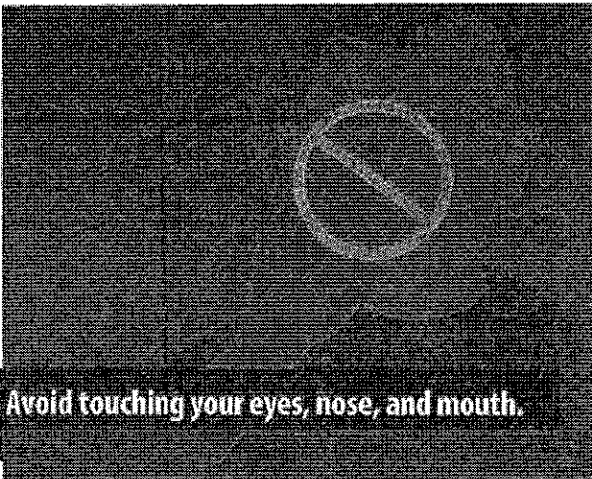
**Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**



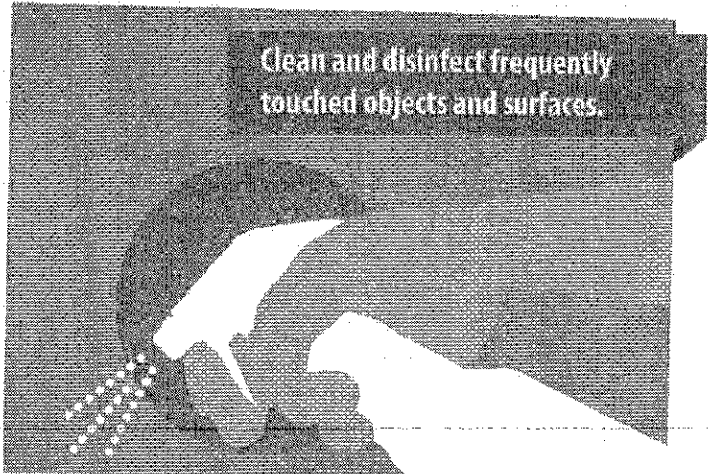
**Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.**



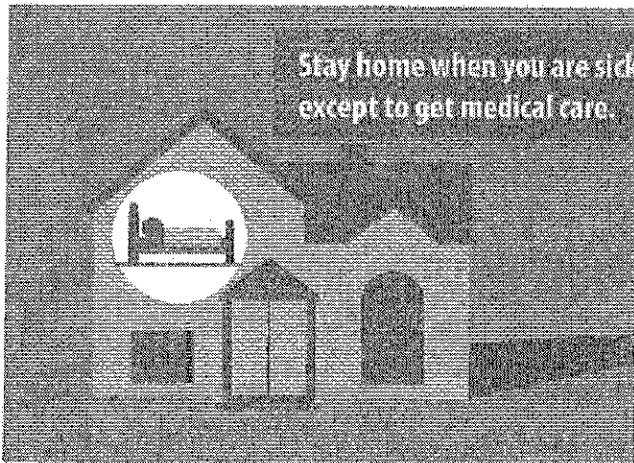
**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.**



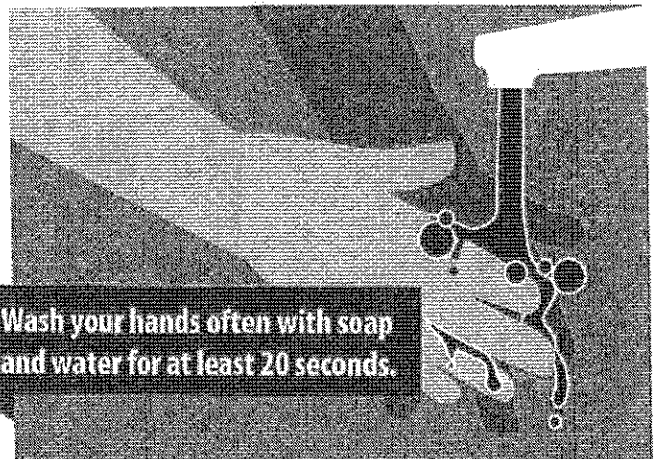
**Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.**



**Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.**



**Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

Texas Department of State  
Health Services

For more information: [dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus](https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus)

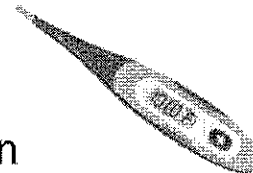
# FOLLOW THESE 5 SAFETY STEPS

to keep us all healthy

**1**

## STAY HOME IF YOU DON'T FEEL WELL

Or if you tested positive for COVID-19 or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days



**2**

## STAY 6 FEET AWAY FROM PEOPLE

who don't live with you, both in and out of the water and avoid sharing items with other people



**3**

## WEAR A CLOTH FACE COVERING

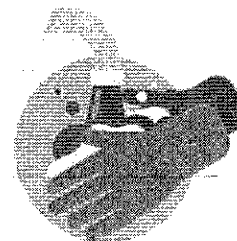
when not in the water\*

\* Don't place cloth face coverings on children under age 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, weak, or otherwise unable to remove the cover without help.



**4**

**WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol



**5**

## COVER YOUR COUGHS AND SNEEZES

with a tissue or your elbow, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash your hands



Now, **let's swim!**



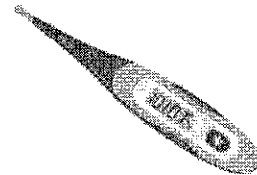
# TOME ESTAS 5 MEDIDAS DE SEGURIDAD

para que todos nos mantengamos sanos

**1**

## QUÉDESE EN CASA SI NO SE SIENTE BIEN

O si la prueba del COVID-19 le da positivo o estuvo expuesto a alguien con COVID-19 en los últimos 14 días



**2**

## MANTÉNGASE A 6 PIES DE OTRAS PERSONAS

que no vivan con usted, tanto dentro como fuera del agua, y evite compartir cosas con otros



**3**

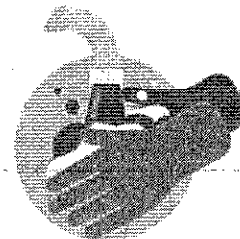
## USE UNA CUBIERTA DE TELA PARA LA CARA cuando no esté en el agua\*

\* No les ponga una cubierta de tela para la cara a los niños de menos de 2 años ni a cualquier persona que tenga dificultad para respirar o esté inconsciente, débil, o que por cualquier otro motivo no pueda quitársela sin ayuda.



**4**

**LÁVESE LAS MANOS FRECUENTEMENTE** con agua y jabón por al menos 20 segundos o use un desinfectante de manos que contenga al menos un 60 % de alcohol



**5**

**CÚBRASE LA NARIZ Y LA BOCA CON UN PAÑUELO DESECHABLE O LA PARTE INTERNA DEL CODO AL TOSER O ESTORNUDAR;** luego bote el pañuelo a la basura y lávese las manos



Ahora, **inademos!**



CS 317344-D 06/25/2020

[cdc.gov/coronavirus-es](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus-es)



Prairie View, Texas Municipal Court  
COVID-19

## **COURT APPEARANCE FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

Please contact the Municipal Court @ (936) 857-5327 or  
clerk@prairieviewtexas.gov to make alternate  
appearance arrangements if any of the following  
applies to you:

- If you are over age 65 years old;
- If you have an underlying health condition such as (high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma);
- If you have an immune system that may be compromised such as by chemotherapy or other conditions requiring such therapy;