

# **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Premont in Jim Wells County**

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the court, the court of the City of Premont will implement the following protective measures:

## **General**

1. The judge 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 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 5, 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 Monitoring Requirements:
  - a. Ask all employees at the start of each workday if they are exhibiting any flu-like symptoms.
  - b. Court staff will monitor individual's health (coughing, sneezing, sore throat, fever, and other COVID-19 symptoms).
3. 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.
4. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings as needed, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures:
  - a. Encourage workers to stay home if sick;
  - b. Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes;
  - c. Provide a place to wash hands or alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol;
  - d. Limit worksite access to only essential workers, if possible;
  - e. Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, or other work tools and
  - f. Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces, equipment, etc. in the work environment.
  - g. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use of all cleaning and disinfection products;
  - h. Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns;

- i. Communicate expectations and updated information to all court employees; and
- j. For more information, visit [www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus).

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:  
Only one offender at a time will be seen starting at 10:00 A.M. on scheduled date of initial appearance.

### **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 court window (a copy of which is attached).
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by sending a pre-hearing notice with information of the alternate measures that are being provided and contact information.

### **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. Our court is at ground level; therefore, stipulating safety COVID-19 precautions for elevators is not necessary.
3. There is only one restroom for each gender; thus, all staff have been notified to stand 6 feet from the entrance door if waiting is necessary.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snackrooms, have been closed to the public.

### **Gallery**

5. 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.
6. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.
7. 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 court window, at the judges bench, and outside of the courtroom and bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel table, and on the judge's bench.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the judge or assistant 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 building, the judge or assistant 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 99.6°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 face 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.

### **Cleaning**

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 3-4 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.

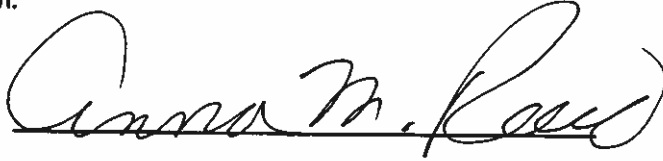
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I have attempted to confer with all court and city employees in the building regarding this Operating Plan as we are both housed in the same building. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local

health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

7/13/2020

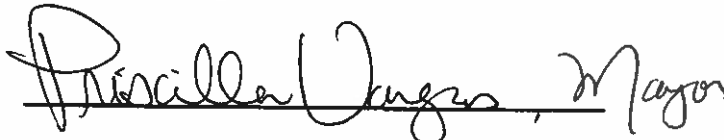
Date



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

8/12/20

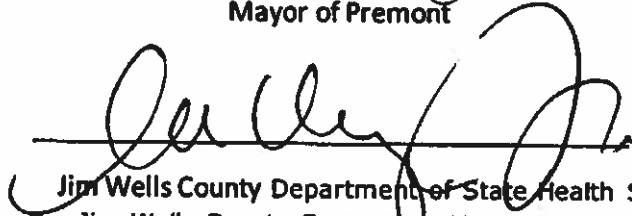
Date



Mayor of Premont

7-13-2020

Date



Jim Wells County Department of State Health Services/  
Jim Wells County Emergency Management Director