

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Quitman City Judiciary

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 courts of Quitman 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 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 4, 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: Temperature checks at the beginning of each shift on court days for all employees entering the building.
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, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: Masks, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be provided to staff.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Hearings will occur remotely when possible. Hearings in person will always be in an established social distanced courtroom; glass in lobby provides separation to accept payments etc. No more than one person in the lobby at a time will be permitted.
In person hearing: Defendants will wait in their vehicle after they have been screened. When it is that defendant's turn on the docket, a phone call will be made to let he/she know they are allowed into the building. If defendant does not have a vehicle or phone, defendant may wait in lobby distanced 6 feet from the payment counter and entrance door. Court will be

held two to three times a month. Four defendants will be allowed in the courtroom at a time. They must sit at least 6 feet apart and follow social distancing guidelines.

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 (a copy of which is attached).
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by reserving an earlier docket time with no other defendants in the courtroom. Each defendant will wait in his/her vehicle until it is their turn on the docket. A phone call will be made to them when they can enter the building.

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.
3. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snackrooms, have been closed to the public.
4. 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.

Gallery

5. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
6. Seating in the courtroom is arranged with 4 chairs 6 feet apart.

Well

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 entrances to the building and near the door of the courtroom and at the payment counter.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom and in the lobby on the payment counter.

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, court staff or a police officer 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, court staff or a police officer 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.
3. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including a mask, face shield, gloves and disinfectant wipes.

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 payment counter and door handles to entrance and exit of the court building mid morning, at noon, and at the end of the day. Restrooms will be cleaned every two hours on court days and will be supplied with disinfectant wipes in restroom for disinfecting after use. On non-court days restrooms will be cleaned daily.
2. In court room, the seat the defendant sat in, podium, and judge's bench will be wiped with disinfecting wipe after each hearing. Also, taking note of anything that has been touched during court will be disinfected.
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

Cloth chairs have been replaced with metal chairs in order to more easily disinfect seating after use.

Pens used by the customers will be given to customers after use.

Podium in courtroom removed and replaced with plastic clip boards.

Air Purifier system installed on A/C units. Reme Halo system.

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 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.

Date: 5/19/2020

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Doan". The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court