

COVID-19 Operating Plan for River Oaks Municipal Court

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 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 of 6 feet minimum, 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 2, 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: This is a small court , one judge , two clerks and a bailiff, and we will self monitor each other and report any health issues.
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: The public contact counter is protected by a glass screen and hand sanitizers are available to both the public and the staff working in the clerks office.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
2. On June 4, 2020, at 5:30 pm , we have only 54 persons scheduled, all first appearance cases, set, no trials, a normal appearance ratio historically never exceeds a 40 percent appearance, a majority of the appearances will be to show proof of compliance on registration , insurance and drivers license tickets, this docket will likely produce the appearance of 20 people . at the most. We make a list of the order of appearance and call cases in first in first out , unless, there are elderly or handicapped individuals which we will accommodate as required. The bailiff will control number of individuals in the court room at any one time so the specially

marked and distanced seating capacity is not exceeded. The Judge will begin hearing matters when the first person arrives and that flow will continue through the docket call.

3. On Saturday, June 6, 2020, I have three short docket calls, the first at 9am, 10 and 11am, consisting of 56, 36 and 32 persons respectively, these are all old cases scheduled for review of payment plans, and a 25 percent appearance ratio would be remarkable. These dockets will be handled as described above, except that these required hearings to give individuals the opportunity to deal with issues involved in the successful completion of the court's requirements.

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 an alternative court date or being seen as soon as possible.

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. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in the courtroom.
3. The public restroom in the court building is open is cleaned after each court date.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery:

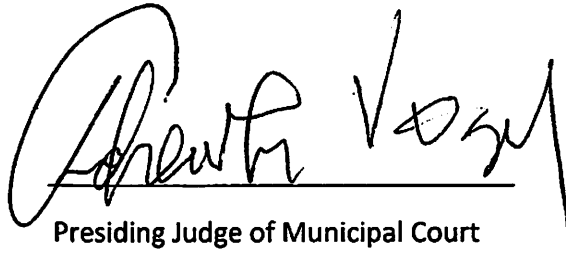
1. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff. The Gallery ordinarily seats 50 persons; however the safe inside the courtroom seating will be restricted to 8 safe zones or persons. The hallway and front lobby will afford 4 additional safe-waiting locations for individuals waiting to be directed to the court by the Bailiff.
2. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.

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

I have met with the Court Administrator. The City Administrator, Marvin Gregory, James Myrick, the City's Emergency Management person and our Bailiff, Robert Cantu in developing this Plan. I will circulate this plan with the Associate Judges, Cecilia Thomas and Jim Minter for their suggestions and to assure that operations consistent with these plans take place in our Court during this period. I have consulted with the Tarrant County Health Official and their response will be attached to this Plan

Date: 5/18/2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Vogel", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

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