



City of Rockwall
The New Horizon

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Rockwall Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, witnesses, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, **the Municipal Court of The City of Rockwall** is implementing the following protective measures effective immediately and until the COVID-19 emergency orders of the Governor of Texas are no longer in effect.

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. The presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the mayor or local health authority and adjust this operating plan as necessary to meet conditions in the city.
3. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 3, 2020.

Judge and Court Staff Health

Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.6°F, or who have 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 who have been in 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.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
Attorney docket beginning at 2pm 55 cases.
Pre-trial docket beginning at 3 pm 35 cases.
Plea dockets beginning at 9 am 45 cases
Juvenile dockets beginning at 3pm 25 cases
Initial appearance docket beginning at 9:30 am
All dockets will be reduced to a maximum of 31 persons in the courtroom at one time.

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.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by either granting reasonable continuances or **allowing individual access in the courtroom.**

Social Distancing Inside Court Building

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 and the maximum capacity has been posted on each restroom door.

Gallery

3. 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.
4. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

5. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judges' 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, outside of the courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations of the court building.

Screening

1. When an individual attempts to enter the **court room**, staff will ask the individual 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 an individual attempts to enter the court room staff will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. An individual whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°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 gloves and masks.

Face Coverings

1. Individuals are 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. Use of such masks is encouraged.

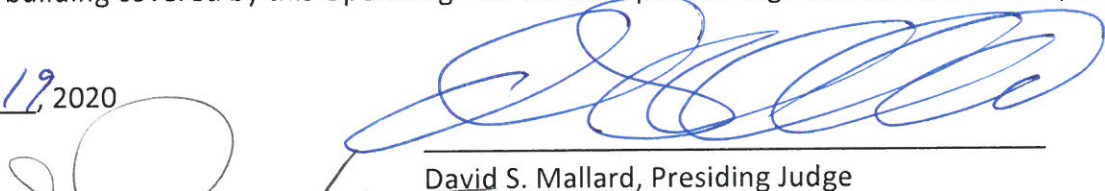
Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 2 hours during business hours on court days.
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 against the coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

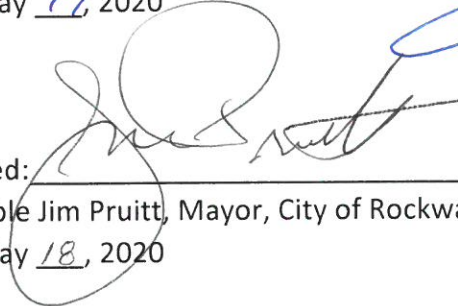
Other

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 mayor or the local health authority, 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: May 17, 2020



David S. Mallard, Presiding Judge

Approved: 
Honorable Jim Pruitt, Mayor, City of Rockwall

Date: May 18, 2020