



COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of San Antonio Municipal Court, 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 the **San Antonio Municipal 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, 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 July 15, 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.
1. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: To promote the health and safety of city employees, court staff, judges, court users, contractors and general public and to implement health protocols aimed at minimizing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, all employees, contractors, visitors, and members of the public who want to enter a city building will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before entry in accordance with the "*On Site Employee Screening Policy*". The policy is attached and made a part of the Court's Operating Plan.
2. 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.
3. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings (when they are not able to maintain a 6 feet physical/social distance from other people and/or leaving their individual office), practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.

4. Protective Measures: Court staff and judges will follow the attached "COSA-Return to Work Protocols" from the City of San Antonio "Return to Work Plan". The plan is attached and made a part of the Court's Operating Plan.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:

Beginning June 1, 2020 to July 14, 2020

- Provide court users a contact free walk up kiosk(s) service located outside the courthouse to resolve cases with court staff/judge and avoid physical and face-to-face contact;
- Courthouse will not introduce opening facilities to the public during this period;
- Jury and non-jury trial settings not resolved remotely by a teleconferencing pretrial conference will be reset for a date after September 1, 2020;
- Attorney access will be provided by dedicated email account and remote plea bargain teleconferencing;
- Court users when appropriate may resolve cases by telephone (210-207-8970), email (sacourt@sanantonio.gov), court website (<https://www.sanantonio.gov/court>) or a Virtual Court Hearing;

July 15, 2020 to August 31, 2020 (date subject to change)

- Partially reopening with modified services for limited number of in-person general appearance hearings;
- Only the individual with the citation will be allowed in the courthouse and in the courtroom; limits will be placed on the number of individuals allowed in the in the courthouse at any given time;
- Provide court users a contact free walk up kiosk(s) service located outside the courthouse to resolve cases with court staff/judge and avoid physical and face-to-face contact and reduce foot traffic;
- Attorney access will be provided by dedicated email account and remote plea bargain teleconferencing;
- Jury and non-jury trial settings not resolved remotely by a teleconferencing pretrial conference will be reset for a date after September 1, 2020;
- Court users when appropriate may resolve cases by telephone (210-207-8970), email (sacourt@sanantonio.gov), court website (<https://www.sanantonio.gov/court>) or a Virtual Court Hearing;

September 1, 2020 and beyond (date subject to change)

- Resume court services applying the "new normal" standards and adding small docket hearings and trials to general appearance hearings;
- Only the individual with the citation will be allowed in the courthouse and in the courtroom; limits will be placed on the number of individuals allowed in the in the courthouse at any given time;

- Provide court users a contact free walk up kiosk(s) service located outside the courthouse to resolve cases with court staff/judge and avoid physical and face-to-face contact and reduce foot traffic;
- Attorney access will be provided by dedicated email account and remote plea bargain teleconferencing;
- Court users when appropriate may resolve cases by telephone (210-207-8970), email (sacourt@sanantonio.gov), court website (<https://www.sanantonio.gov/court>) or a Virtual Court Hearing;

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. After the court partially reopens to in-person hearings, vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by allowing only those individuals in between the hours of 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. Also, these individuals will be encouraged to resolve their citations by one of the methods mentioned above. Individuals from this population who are set for trial will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

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 an elevator. If more than one individual from the same household is in an elevator, no other individuals will be permitted in the elevator.
3. 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.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.
5. Social distancing signage; signage in lobbies to remind individuals to maintain social distancing protocols.

Gallery

6. 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.

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

Well

8. 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.
9. Contested in person court hearings will not resume until after September 1, 2020.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of elevators on each floor, outside of each 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 on each floor of the court building.
4. Court staff, judges and building cleaning staff will follow the city's "*COSA-Return to Work Protocols*" from the City of San Antonio "*Return to Work Plan*" The plan is attached and made a part of the Court's Operating Plan.

Screening

1. To promote the health and safety of city employees, court staff, judges, court users, contractors and general public and to implement health protocols aimed at minimizing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, all employees, contractors, visitors, and members of the public who want to enter a city building will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before entry in accordance with the "*On Site Employee Screening Policy*". The policy is attached and made a part of the Court's Operating Plan.

Face Coverings

1. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings (when they are not able to maintain a 6 feet physical/social distance from other people and/or leaving their individual office), practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
2. All court users and the public entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
3. 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 if the supply is available.

Cleaning

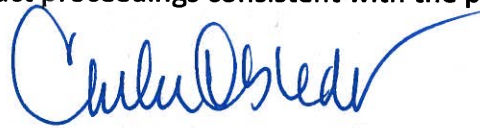
1. Court staff, judges and building cleaning staff will follow the city's "COSA-Return to Work Protocols" from the City of San Antonio "Return to Work Plan" to include the following:
 - a. Improve engineering controls in building ventilation system; rates and outdoor air flow;
 - b. Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, customers, and visitors;
 - c. Provide adaptive energy systems to adjust for less employees in the work area;
 - d. Install new sensors to reduce touch points; light and power switches and door handles;
 - e. Regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, and restrooms;
 - f. Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility;
 - g. Antimicrobial materials on surface;
 - h. Place readily visible signage at the business to remind everyone of best hygiene practices.
2. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

1. Judges and court staff will adhere to the *City of San Antonio "Return to Work" Plan*. The plan is attached and made a part of the Court's Operating Plan.

I have attempted to confer with all judges 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 with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 4/4/2020



CARLA OBLEDO
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court


Review and Consultation

I certify that that the San Antonio Municipal Court has consulted with the Mayor regarding this operating plan and will be taking the necessary precautions to protect individuals entering the municipal court.

Ron Nirenberg, Mayor
City of San Antonio

Date

I certify that that the San Antonio Municipal Court has consulted with the Local Health Authority regarding this operating plan and will be taking the necessary precautions to protect individuals entering the municipal court.




Metro Health District
City of San Antonio

06-04-2020

Date

Review and Consultation

I certify that that the San Antonio Municipal Court has consulted with the Mayor regarding this operating plan and will be taking the necessary precautions to protect individuals entering the municipal court.



Ron Nirenberg, Mayor
City of San Antonio

6/12/20

Date

I certify that that the San Antonio Municipal Court has consulted with the Local Health Authority regarding this operating plan and will be taking the necessary precautions to protect individuals entering the municipal court.

_____, Metro Health District
City of San Antonio

Date